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THE

CHARGES

OF

JEAN BAPTISTE MASSILLON,

BISHOP OF CLERMONT.

ADDRESSED TO HIS CLERGY.

ALSO,

TWO ESSAYS:

THE ONE

ON THE ART OF PREACHING,

FROM THE FRENCH OF M. REYBAZ,

AND THE OTHER ON

THE COMPOSITION OF A SERMON,

AS ADAPTED TO

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

&c. &c.

****

We should attentively read the Treatises written by wise and good Men concerning the Duties of God's Ministers: to see if we are such as they describe, and stir up ourselves to become such as we ought.—ABP. SECKER.

****

BY THE REV. THEOPS. ST. JOHN, L. L. B. &c.

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CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - v

CHARGE I.

On the Excellence of the Priesthood - - - - 21

CHARGE II.

On Propriety of Character - - - - - - 39

CHARGE III.

On Zeal - - - - - - - - - - - 55

CHARGE IV.

On being appointed to the Christian Ministry - - 74

CHARGE V.

On Reflection on the Success of our Ministry - - 87

CHARGE VI.

On Solicitude for the Salvation of Souls - - - 100

CHARGE VII.

On Solicitude to Suppress Vice - - - - 113

CHARGE VIII.

On a Good Example - - - - - - - 132

CHARGE IX.

On the Excellence of the Ministry - - - - 144

CHARGE X.

On the Manner in which the Clergy are to Conduct themselves among Men of the World - - - 156

CHARGE XI.

On the Prudent Conversation and Behaviour of the Clergy 172

Digitized by Google

CHARGE XII.

On the Solicitude the Clergy ought to shew for their People, when confined by Sickness - - - - - 182

CHARGE XIII.

The pernicious effects of Avarice in the Clergy - 194

CHARGE XIV.

On Mildness and Gentleness - - - - - - 204

CHARGE XV.

On the Necessity of Prayer - - - - - - 217

CHARGE XVI.

On Study and Knowledge - - - - - - 234

A LETTER ON THE ART OF PREACHING, translated from the French of M. Reybaz - - - - - - 253

THOUGHTS ON THE COMPOSITION OF A SERMON, as adapted to the Church of England - - - - - 281

A PRAYER - - - - - - - - - - 321

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INTRODUCTION.

THE perusal of Massillon's Synodal Discourses, or Ecclesiastical Charges, having sometimes refreshed my mind with comfort, and sometimes filled me with reproof; I was induced to translate such of them as are more immediately applicable to the ministry of the Church of England; after which, thinking that other men might, like myself, be quickened to greater diligence, and more active exertions, in the prosecution of their holy calling, by reading them in our own language, I at length determined to commit them to the press. I have an additional encouragement to do this, in the persuasion, that young men designed for holy orders may—if they condescend, as I trust they will, to read them—be enabled to form, perhaps, a more exact judgment of the awful obligations the ministry imposes on them; and may, at the same time, be stimulated to discharge those obligations, as soon as they undertake them, with more credit to themselves, advantage to the Church, and glory to Almighty God, than might otherwise be, invariably, the case.

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Massillon is an author, who cannot be read with pleasure, nor even endured, in a literal translation: he multiplies words with such abundant profusion, that an English reader, not perceiving—it being impossible to preserve—the graces of his style, would be fatigued, and even disgusted, by the same idea so often, with, scarcely, a change of words, presented to his mind. I was, therefore, reduced to this delimma—either to abridge and translate the author—and of consequence, sometimes unavoidably, to weaken his sense, and retain, to a certain degree, the * idiom of his language—or to express his sentiments in my own style;—and had I preferred the latter—and had even succeeded—I should have offered to the reader, at best, but an imperfect imitation.

I am aware that one objection will be made to these Discourses—independent of the want of elegance and ornament, which may, I fear, be justly attributed to the translation—viz. that the same thoughts, even in this abridgment, more especially in the first eight Charges, too frequently occur. I could not, however, prevail with myself to reduce them to a smaller compass; the sentiments being so exceedingly important, that they

* Whilst the reader is perusing the following Charges, should he be disposed to censure me, I must request him to bear in mind, as my apology, the observation of the first of critics and the best of men, Dr. Johnson, that—"No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom."

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cannot, in my judgment, be too often inculcated, nor too earnestly impressed. The last five are termed Conferences, denoting a plain and familiar manner of address: the others are called Synodal Discourses, or Ecclesiastical Charges; the tendency, indeed, of them all, is the same—to illustrate the nature, and enforce the duties, of the Clerical character.

"As the duties," says the Editor, "of the ecclesiastical profession, are very different from those prescribed to the rest of Christians, this part of the works of Father Massillon, in which he confines himself to the instructions of the Clergy, may not, perhaps, appear so interesting as his Practical Discourses; we may, notwithstanding, justly assert, that the public, in general, may derive from them the highest advantage. For all men may now know, what sort of labourers they ought to supplicate of the Almighty, for the cultivation of his Vineyard. Taught by these Exhortations, the solemn obligations imposed on the Christian Ministry, all men may see, that nothing is so deplorable as the blindness of parents, in bringing up their children to the Church, who have not TALENT and DISPOSITIONS adapted to the calling, thereby becoming the destroyers of the souls of their offspring, as also of an infinite number of Christians, lost by the unpardonable negligence of those Ministers, who, unqualified as to talent, and indisposed as to prin-

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ciple, obtrude themselves as labourers in the Gospel-field.

" The species of eloquence which prevails throughout these discourses, is not that of Sermons. Energy and warmth become the pulpit; the tone of the Charge in general, and especially, that of Ecclesiastical Charges, should be more mild and gentle. This is what Father Massillon strictly regards: he addresses his Clergy, as men acquainted with their duty, in the observance of which, he labors to establish himself, and to the conscientious fulfilling of which, he expresses the utmost solicitude to recal the Shepherds of the flock: he does not urge those strong and forcible remonstrances, which are sometimes delivered from the pulpit, to awaken men from their insensibility; but he represents, in the most feeling and pathetic manner, the melancholy and dreadful consequences, which arise, not merely from the profligacy, but even from the indifference, or the ignorance, of the Clergy; that the Preachers of the Gospel cannot bring ruin on themselves alone; but that, with their own, they involve the destruction of a number of souls, for whose redemption the Son of God vouchsafed to shed his most precious blood."

" The Charges, which I denominate Episcopal, because they were composed during the Prelacy of the author, are in that style in which a Bishop should address his Clergy. He varies his voice in

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a thousand different ways; but it is always the voice of a father, or rather of a brother, who addresses his fellow laborers in the ministry; he descends to the most minute and simple details, which he ennobles and renders interesting, by the turn he gives them, and the expressions in which they are conveyed."

This amiable Prelate discovers a thorough knowledge of the human heart. The most conscientious Clergyman, may, after perusing these Charges, be surprised to find, that, in many instances, in which he had, as he might think, discharged his duty, comparatively well, he has been seduced by indifference, or diverted by inattention, to the neglect of some parts of his vocation, which have a powerful effect in deterring the profligate from vice, disturbing the lukewarm in indifference, and confirming the religious in piety.

When Massillon delivered these discourses, the Clergy of France, were rapidly declining from the professional diligence and exemplary demeanor, by which they had formerly adorned a Church, whose doctrines are inconsistent with truth, and whose ceremonies are repugnant to reason. The reader will perceive the good Father's solicitude to restrain them from the paths which led to national evil, and individual ruin—which subjected their religion to censure and reproach, and themselves to scorn and derision. He does not exercise their understandings, by profound argu-

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ments, or learned disquisitions; but, always keeping in view the inestimable value of salvation, and the indescribable horrors of reprobation, he brings them at once, before the Tribunal of God, and introduces the souls lost by the profligacy of their example, and the inefficacy of their ministry, into the divine presence, as testifying against them. From the inattention and degeneracy of the French Clergy, have arisen, it is said, all the calamities with which that unhappy nation hath been visited.

This translation, if read in the Northern Schools, which every year supply the Church abundantly, and if in the Universities, previous to the first degree, may impress young minds with a sense of the awful obligations, on which they are about to enter. It may also be equally serviceable to conscientious men, who, disappointed in other professions, or not succeeding in trade, enter, if they have good connections, into the sacred ministry. Parents often, we see, prevail with their sons to take orders, contrary to their inclinations. A father may, in this translation, understand what all men are required to be, to support the ecclesiastical character, without incurring guilt themselves, and without endangering the salvation of the souls entrusted to their charge; and if his sons do not promise, by diligence in study, by steadiness of behaviour, and piety of life, to "save both themselves, and those that hear them," he will, it may be hoped, have the integrity to renounce

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a probable, or even a promised, advantage, and will suffer them to pursue that course which is more congenial to their dispositions, and better adapted to their talents. This publication will shew the PRINCIPLE by which the Clergy should be actuated, and the ABILITY they should possess: and to those in whom such principle and ability are not found, it is to be wished, that the door of the ministry should not be easily opened.

I submitted these Exhortations to the perusal of a very respectable Clergyman, who would have dissuaded me from publishing them, under the idea that they would be considered as reflecting a degree of censure on the Clergy of the Established Church. I was astonished at this suggestion. For no man, as my friend well knows, however high his station, venerable his character, or enviable his preferment, has either a greater attachment to the Church, or a more exalted opinion of her Clergy, than myself; and my attachment arises, neither from gratitude for past, nor expectation of future, favours. The Clergy I consider, and such they, I believe, are very generally considered, as Scholars, as Divines, as Christians, the most learned, useful, and examplary body of men, of which society can boast. But is this to preclude me from offering to the world, in an English dress, the discourses of a Catholic Prelate, which, had the Clergy of his nation observed, their religion, would, it is probable, have been now flourishing, and themselves, instead of being murdered by the Assassin,

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or scorned by the Infidel, have been thought worthy, after having "been put in trust with the Gospel," of being continued to dispense its blessings? Happy would it be, for society in general, would the Clergy direct their united endeavours to restore our own Church to its former splendor—by bringing back those, who having, with unbecoming precipitation, and unnatural degeneracy, first deserted, would afterwards, either betray it by stratagem, or overturn it by violence—by persuading those who affect to be of her Communion, to attend her services, to observe her ordinances, and to conduct themselves like men who enjoy the preaching of the Gospel in its genuine purity, unadulterated by wordly wisdom on the one hand, or by crafty mysticism on the other hand: The accomplishment of this blessed end depends solely on the Clergy themselves. My observations on this subject I offer with deference, I hope, therefore, without offence, but not, I implore the Almighty, without effect. First, let every Clergyman enquire, impartially, of his own heart—and the enquiry is to be one day made by him "to whom all hearts are open, and all desires are known"—whether Religion has, in his parish, failed of its influence, either through negligence in the discharge of his duty, or impropriety in the conduct of his life? Whatever be the answer which his conscience gives, let him next enquire —whether he reads the public prayers with so much devotion as to inspire his congregation with a spirit of piety? If he reads them with

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irreverent precipitation, or with disgusting tediousness, instead of inducing men to "pay their vows in the great congregation," he is, without, perhaps, being conscious of it himself, the cause of alienating their minds from the service of their Maker; and the absence of his parisioners from the House of God is to be attributed, either to his want of seriousness, of consideration, or of judgment: next let him enquire—whether the discourses he delivers, produce the effect which was intended to be produced by the preaching of the Gospel? Has he the satisfaction of perceiving decorum triumphing over degeneracy, sobriety over intoxication, and piety over profaneness? If he fail entirely of success, either the subjects of his sermons, or his mode of treating, or of delivering them, are not applicable to the wants, or not powerful over the affections, of his parisioners; and having, therefore, neglected, whether to cultivate the soil with diligence, to select the seed with judgment, or to sow it with all requisite care, he cannot be surprised that he has not an abundant crop at the time of harvest. I presume to suggest these considerations, as it is by their having an universal influence, that thousands who have deserted the Church, are to be brought back into the fold; and, that the vast numbers, who call themselves Churchmen, but who live some without the profession, and many without the practice, of Religion, may be deterred from evil courses, and established in virtuous habits.

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Observation on the state of the Church, has confirmed me in the opinion, that some improvements are wanting, to attach men more steadily to her service. We see in the mornings large congregations in many parishes; and in the afternoons we see the very persons, of whom those congregations were composed, sitting in their houses, or standing at their doors, regardless of their obligations to go a second time "to the House of the Lord." This prevailing inattention takes its rise, I apprehend, from three causes—either, that their attendance on the service of the Church, in the morning, proceeds from custom almost independent of religous principle, and that they persuade themselves they thereby sufficiently discharge their duty;—or, that they receive little edification, and feel little interest in the celebration of divine service;—or, lastly, that they can when they are disposed say their prayers at home, and that there is, therefore, no occasion, to go to Church for that purpose, seeing there is *no public instruction*. The almost universal neglect of evening service, owes its prevailance, I doubt not, to one of these three causes. If, which seems most probable, to the last, the objection may easily be removed. The Clergy, indeed, allege, that their parisioners would not, from the influence of confirmed habit, be prevailed with to attend evening service. I know some conscientious Clergymen, who instituted evening sermons; but they complained, that their Churches were not so well attended as the conventicles, and therefore, precipitately, unadvisedly, and I had al-

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most said, irreligiously, discontinued their instructions from the pulpit. Patient labor, and unremitted perseverance, might, accompanied by God's blessing, have been ultimately successful. Had my friends—instead of being discouraged by obstacles, which diligence might have, gradually, lessened, and judgment, eventually, surmounted—prepared awakening and pathetic discourses, level to the understandings, and interesting to the affections, of their hearers, and enforced their public preaching, by personal visits, applauding and confirming the attention and piety of the well-disposed among their people, they would not, I am persuaded, have had reason to complain, either of the indisposition of their hearers to instruction, or the inutility of their own labors. But I would suggest an attractive improvement in preaching, or rather, I would substitute a more efficacious mode of improving the morals, and informing the understandings, of men. Would every Clergyman, after the morning service, give notice, that, as a Psalm, or Lesson, or the Epistle, or Gosple, seemed either peculiarly striking, or not easy to be understood, or often misapplied, the explanation of it should be the subject of the evening instruction, he would soon, without question, have a regular congregation.

It were greatly to be wished, as an additional incentive to attend public worship, that the elocution of the Clergy of the Church of England, were more impressive than it is—an acquirement not to

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be generally attained—unless the two Universities, seeing the indispensable necessity of it, should consider public speaking, as an ESSENTIAL part of an academical education. Of what use to nine parishes out of ten, is the best critical scholar, or the deepest mathematician, if he is not able to deliver a sermon, so as to engage the attention, and affect the heart, of his hearers? He, feeling his professional deficiency, accompanied, at the same time, with a consciousness of superior learning, despises them; and they, not knowing how to appreciate, and deriving no advantage, from, his knowledge, disregard him. Thus is the bread of life, when distributed by his hands, deprived of its vital sustenance. Had he employed a part of his leisure, in the University, in cultivating the talents of a public speaker, that he might have become, agreeably to his designation, an instrument "of turning many to righteousness"—he would, instead of being professionally useless, have "converted many from the error of their ways." What possible advantage can a congregation derive from hearing a young man, who is entirely unacquainted with the art of public speaking, read for fifteen or twenty minutes, an elegant essay, or an ingenous disquisition, equally adapted, with a few verbal alterations, to an assembly of Catholics, Jews or Mahometans—ashamed all the time of looking them in the face? Such an one might have been active as a shopkeeper, skilful as a farmer, diligent as a tradesman, and may, perhaps be distinguished as a philosopher—but it is

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with difficulty, we can bring ourselves to believe, that he "was moved by the Holy Ghost," to preach the Gospel.

The Bishops, before they ordain a candidate for holy orders, from either of the Universities, very properly, require him to produce a certificate from a Divinity Professor, of his having attended a certain course of lectures. But, what ever be his classical, philosophical, and theological knowledge, if he cannot address a popular assembly—if he cannot, by his mode of speaking, secure the attention of the wandering, suppress the levity of the giddy, and attract the mind of the inquisitive, hearer—he may engage by his example, edify by his conversation, and instruct by his writings, but he will not be an useful Preacher.

Solicitous to uphold the credit of the Church, and to promote the success of the Gospel, I express a most fervent wish, that the Northern Schools, which prepare very many young men for the Church, would establish the custom of frequent public speaking, and—which is still more desirable—that the several Colleges, in the two Universities, would, as an indispensible preliminary to a degree, require of every one in their Society, to repeat in their chapel, in every term, speeches, declamations, parts of sermons, &c. &c. An University education, would then qualify, as it was, originally, designed to do, *all* who enter into holy orders, to discharge the

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popular part of their vocation, with honour to themselves, and benefit to their hearers; and the good Shepherd would have the comfort, not always awaiting dignities and preferments, of seeing his flock daily "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I introduce to the reader, without any comment or observation, a passage from my Lord Bacon's Works, which he will not, perhaps, think inapposite.

Speaking of a custom that formerly prevailed, which was, as he expresses it, "the best way, to frame and train up Preachers, to handle the Word of God as it ought to be handled, that hath been practised—the Ministers did meet upon a week day, in some principal town, where there was some ancient grave Minister that was President, and an auditory admitted of gentlemen, or other persons of leisure. Then every Minister, successively, beginning with the youngest, did handle one and the same part of Scripture; spending severally some quarter of an hour or better, and in the whole, some two hours: and so the exercise being begun and concluded with prayer, and the President giving a text for the next meeting, the assembly was dissolved. Every practice of science," he continues, "hath an exercise of erudition and initiation, before men come to the life: *only preaching, which is the worthiest, and wherein it is most danger to do amiss, wanteth an intro-*

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duction, and is ventured and rushed upon at the first."

He next proceeds to say, it is his wish, "that the same exercise was used in the Universities, for young Divines, before they presumed to preach, as well as in the country, for Ministers."

Massillon having given his Clergy no directions, respecting either the delivery or composition of a discourse, I offer to the reader, a Translation of a Letter on the Art of Preaching, by M. Reybaz, a Minister of Geneva. I also subjoin such sentiments as have occurred to my mind, on the nature of a sermon, in so far as preaching affects the Church of England. The younger Clergy may not, perhaps, be displeased, that I add a Prayer, which may, by those who have not previously composed one of more fervor and piety, be read devoutly in the study.

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CHARGE I.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.

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first appears in the House of God, duly ordained to discharge the sacred offices of Religion. And to him may be addressed these awful words— "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising "again of many in Israel;"—thou art ordained to the service of God, to become the instrument of life or of death to many: and it is literally true of every one of us, that we shall either build up or destroy; that we shall become a saviour of life or of death among Christians.

With what sentiments, then, do we contemplate that holy calling in which we have engaged? Some take it upon them with the expectation of being advanced and exalted; accustomed, by domestic and familiar conversation, to view the awful obligations of the ministry through the flattering medium of wealth and dignity. Like the profane Heliodorus, they enter into the temple only, because they expect to find vast treasures, which were originally designed, not to encourage the insolence of pride, and the splendor of distinction, but to protect the widow, and support the orphan.

Others, influenced by the suggestion of a calm and easy temper, repose themselves in the Lord's vineyard, merely to shun the troubles, and escape the embarrassments, of business, as in a safe and tranquil port, where they promise themselves an exemption from corroding cares, and security from vexatious engagements.

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Some feel an inherent propensity to ambition, and embrace, in the sacred professon, the opportunity of displaying conscious excellence, or ostentatious merit; and, from the exertion of their talents, anticipate, not so much the salvation, as the applause, of their hearers.

Such are the views by which many are actuated in devoting themselves to the ministry, not considering that, when we have once engaged in it, we become public men; our talents eloquent instructors, our lives amiable examples: we are, as it were, the chief corner-stones on which the whole edifice rests; and hereafter we can neither continue firm without supporting those around us, nor can we fall without involving them in our ruin.

To a Minister of the Gospel, whether his station be exalted, or his lot obscure, are entrusted the interests of mankind: he is to carry daily to the throne of grace the wants and necessities of God's heritage. The princes of the earth expect that the complaints and requests of their subjects be laid before them by their immediate servants, and that their graces and favors may, through the same medium, be diffused: such is the order established of God in his Church; and hence it is that the Canons enjoin every Minister to read daily the public prayers, persuaded that the prayers of God's Ministers are the channels of public blessings.

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Now he whose heart is devoted to the world, cannot participate in the things of God; he who reluctantly retires a few moments from secular business, or enticing pleasures, to draw near to God with his lips,—what blessings can such an one reasonably hope to obtain for others, of a Being whom he does not know, and whom he is afraid to address in his own behalf? What advantage is derived from his ministry to the society in which he lives, and more especially to the souls committed to his care? Does the Church perceive in him a defender, an intercessor, a guardian of her doctrines, and a supporter of her holiness? Will not the degeneracy of manners, and the want of faith among men—will not the evils which afflict, and the divisions which rend, the Church, be considered, at the tribunal of God, as his work? Will he not, in that terrible day of the Lord, bear the reproach of many weak and unhappy souls, who, had their efforts been encouraged by his piety, and their perseverance supported by his prayers, might have repented of their past sins, and adorned their Christian profession? He is placed in the sanctuary as a cloud without water, and dark at the same time, which is not merely dry, but which prevents the influence of heaven from falling on the earth.

Whence proceed, do you suppose, the neglect of worship, the decay of piety, the profligacy of manners, which are so injurious to society, and dishonourable to God? From the negligence and

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unconcern of the Ministers of the Gospel. We are too frequently the first cause of degeneracy of conduct, and forgetfulness of God.

A Minister is a mediator with God for men. Now, what blessings can be expected from the intercessions of him who shall appear never to have received, or having received, shall have wickedly extinguished, the spirit of his sacred calling? What, alas! but schisms and divisions in the Church, an alarming ignorance of the genius of the Gospel, and an universal increase of depravity of morals? If, in the infancy of the Christian Church, sickness and unprepared deaths were the consequence of an unworthy receiving of the Holy Communion, what severity, O God! wilt thou not inflict on impure sacrifices and profane oblations.

Unworthy Pastors, like Jonas, are disobedient prophets, who occasion those storms and tempests which have so often nearly shipwrecked the vessel of the Church, and which would have drowned it in the waters, had the gates of hell been able to prevail against the promise of our Lord; and had he not put bounds to the impetuous waves of the sea, which they were not allowed to pass. So many people separated from the unity of the faith, carried about with diverse and strange doctrines, will one day rise up against and condemn those worthless Ministers, whose unpardonable negligence and guilty lukewarmness have provoked the

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divine justice to permit heresy to increase, and abound more and more. Hear how God complains by his prophet,—"Many pastors have destroyed "my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under "foot, they have made my portion a desolate wilder- "ness: they have made it desolate, and being de- "solate, it mourneth unto me; the whole land is "made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." What calamity, then, may not one single Minister, who is unworthy his sacred office, bring upon the Church!—"He is set for the falling of many."

A Clergyman is a fellow-labourer with God in the work of salvation: he delivers to men the word of life and of reconciliation; he supports them with the bread which came down from heaven, the word of truth. But he who is unworthy the sacred office, becomes a fellow-worker with Satan, in the seduction and ruin of his brethren: and that such men have, at every period, crept into the Church, cannot be denied; men who have entered into this holy calling without a conviction of its importance, and a knowledge of its duties; who undertake it without zeal, and discharge it without judgment; incapable of discriminating when to feed with milk, and when to nourish with strong meat. Innumerable are the evils with which the Ministry of such men afflicts the Church; —the security and impenitence of sinners—a disregard of the Ordinances of Religion, more especially an entire neglect, or an unworthy receiving, of the Holy Communion;—the ridicule and scoffs

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of many, when, in the discharge of our professional obligations, we undertake to undeceive them ;— and lastly, their thoughtlessness and unconcern when lying on the bed of death. To these ignorant dispensers of the word it is owing that the very face of Christianity is changed.

Now a Minister, worldly in his affections, and irregular in his conduct, although he should do no other injury to religion than exhibit his own life, introduces an accumulation of evils into the Christian Church. What secret satisfaction! what encouraging apologies for excess, when many find their follies countenanced, and their vices authorised, by his depravity! We preach to them in vain: the life of the Clergy, of which they are witnesses, is, with the generality of men, the Gospel; it is not what we declare in the House of God, it is what they see us practise in our general demeanor*; they look upon the public ministry as a stage designed for the display of exalted principles, beyond the reach of human weakness; but they consider our life as the reality by which they are to be directed.

Yes, my Reverend Brethren, we are as lamps set up on high to enlighten the House of God;

* "And here, I conceive, it is, that we of the Clergy are chiefly apt to fail. We do not always appear in the common Intercourses of Life sufficiently penetrated with the Importance of our Function, or sufficiently assiduous to promote the Ends of our Mission."—Abp. Secker.

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but from the moment the malicious breath of the evil one has extinguished them, we diffuse on every side a noxious vapor, which darkens, which defiles every thing, and which becomes "a savor of death unto them that perish:" we are the pillars of the sanctuary, which, if overthrown and scattered in public places, become stones of stumbling to them that pass by.

But the Church is not, God be praised! disgraced by many of so profligate a character: yet it cannot be dissembled that there are some, who, by their lukewarmness in Religion, or their attachment to the world, weaken the efficacy of their ministry*. For not keeping alive in their breasts the spirit and the grace of their calling, by prayer, by mediation, by a life of sanctity and holiness, they have neither power nor inclination to speak of the things of God. They perform the duties of their sacred function without zeal, and without interest, and, by consequence, without a blessing: they pronounce the most awful and affecting truths with an indifference and insensibility which deprive them of all their force; the coldness of their heart freezes the words on their tongue; and it is not possible that they can inspire their hearers with the ardor of Religion, the

* Too possibly a great part of our People may like the lukewarm amongst us the better for resembling themselves, and giving them no Uneasiness on Comparison, but seeming to authorize their Indifference. But then, such of us can do them no good."—Abp. Secker.

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divine fire of the love of God, when they do not feel a single spark of it in their own breasts. For we must apply our leisure to meditation, and engage our heart in piety, if we would expatiate on the holiness of the Gospel, with glory to God, and edification to our hearers; if we would inspire those who violate its precepts with a dread of God's displeasure, if we would persuade them to avert his wrath, and secure his favour. Hence it is, that where "holiness to the Lord" is not eminently conspicuous in the life and conversation of the Ministers of the Gospel, many people depart from the service of the Church, unconcerned for their sins, and indifferent about their salvation: hence the preaching of the Gospel without success, the prayers of the Church without avail, all the Ordinances of Religion, and all the means of salvation unedifying and unserviceable to Christians.

Although we should not perform any of the public offices of Religion—for I do not at present enquire whether it is allowable to enter into the Church, and to continue in it unemployed—although we should not discharge any of its duties, do we not still continue to be examples to mankind; and do not all men, after we have taken upon us the sacred profession, look to our morals for encouragement in virtue, or for a sanction in vice?

The Word of God informs us that the most dreadful punishment which the Lord can inflict

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upon cities and kingdoms, is to send wicked Ministers among them: in this manner did he punish Jerusalem for all its transgressions. "I will give "them pastors," said he, "who shall call evil "good, and good evil; who shall not build up "that which is fallen; and who shall walk ac- "cording to their own ways." This is the most terrible of his punishments. When he is not thoroughly provoked, he contents himself with arming kings against kings, and people against people; he reverses the order of the seasons; he strikes the country with barrenness; he spreads desolation, famine, and death on the earth. But when he says in his wrath, what chastisement have I yet in reserve to inflict on my people, and what is the last mark of mine anger that I can shew unto them—"They," says he, "which led them, shall cause them to err."

Gracious God! what is my lot among thy Ministers! I have not surely so far forgotten thee as to devote my ministry to the service of the enemy of mankind, and to lead to perdition those souls whom thou hast redeemed by the precious blood of thine own Son! If, notwithstanding, I pollute the ministry of thy word with a lukewarm spirit, or a carnal heart, "I am set for the fall of many;" and thou hast, perhaps, reserved me unto these times of supineness and degeneracy, as the most severe scourge with which thou canst punish the indolent inattention of some, and the daring profligacy of others! But, if an unworthy

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Minister be set for the fall and ruin, a godly Minister is, on the other hand, ordained for the rising and salvation, of many.

A pastor is charged with the welfare of God's people; he is one of those messengers who are continually ascending and descending the ladder of Jacob: he descends from it in order that he may acquaint himself with the necessities of the Church; he ascends by prayer, that he may bear them before the throne of God, and open the bosom of inexhaustible compassion upon the wants of the Gospel-fold. Abundant are the graces, manifold the blessings, which the prayers of a righteous Minister bring down upon the Lord's vineyard. They are the supplications of a pastor ordained of God, who prays by virtue of his office in the name of the whole body of Christian people, and to whose prayers, through the merits and mediation of Christ, the ears of the Father are always open.

There is nothing which the intercessions of a godly Shepherd of the flock cannot obtain of the Father of Mercies. We read, that the Almighty, unwilling to be prevented from punishing the Israelites, who had grievously offended Him, condescended to entreat Moses and Aaron not to withhold his arm, lifted up to chastise the iniquities of his people, but to suffer him to "pour upon them his hot displeasure;" as though it had not been possible for him to withstand the power of their supplications. A pastor, who is a man of prayer,

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may, indeed, be said to be ordained for the salvation of many.

A Minister appears in the sanctuary as the representative of Jesus Christ, beseeching the Father of Mercies to protect the Church against the attacks of error, to unite in its bosom those who have separated from its worship, and to direct and govern it in all its proceedings, wherever it is established: in this character he offers prayers and supplications "for kings, and for all that are in authority," that they may, by their authority, preserve the peace of the Church, and, by their example, enforce the sancity of its worship.

To the fervent supplications of godly Ministers the Church is indebted for religious princes, faithful pastors, the birth of distinguished men, whom God raises up from time to time to awaken mankind to defend the faith against the subtilty of error, and to prevent vanity from usurping the place of truth: to the same source must we attribute unexpected occurrences in public calamities; the suspension of punishment; the termination of wars, in conjunctures which threatened a long continuance. Those who judge of circumstances by the view which human reason presents, ascribe them to the wisdom of princes, and the policy of their ministers; whereas, could they perceive events in their causes, they might find them to be produced by some obscure Pastors, who have

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greater interest, and more powerful sway, in public events, than those important men who appear at the head of affairs, and seem to hold in their hands the fate of empires. What a treasure, then, has the earth in a godly Pastor! how inestimable a blessing is he, not merely to the Church of which he is a member, but to society at large, to which he belongs! Powerful, then, my Reverend Brethren, are our motives, and animating our inducements, to renew within us the spirit of our holy calling, and never to suffer that first fervor which consecrated us to the service of the alter, to cool into negligence, or be smothered with lukewarmness.

But a Minister of the Gospel is a fellow-laborer with God in the salvation of souls by the preaching of the Word, by the administration of the Sacraments, by the discharge of all the pastoral duties which conduce to the everlasting happiness of mankind. A holy and enlightened pastor is the instrument of various blessings to the world. How many righteous men are, through his means, supported in piety! how many careless sinners made sensible of their danger, awakened from their impenitence, converted to the truth by the force of his arguments, and the persuasion of his life! If he preach the Word, he informs the ignorant, convinces the doubtful, confirms the pious: and such is the prevalence of his example, that it at once instructs and persuades, and is even

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more instrumental in bringing sinners to God than his public discourses. What blessings then may not one apostolic Minister diffuse among men! Twelve only were employed in the conversion of the whole earth.

Although a righteous Minister shall confine all the good he does to the efficacy of an exemplary and edifying life, although he should only appear as a private character, his engaging demeanor, and pious conversation would authorize us to affirm that he is ordained for the salvation of many. Great, then, is the blessing to mankind, when God sends an holy Pastor, whose instructive piety is an object of admiration to men and angels! Such an one is a perpetual Gospel, which mankind have constantly before their eyes, and against which they have nothing to allege. If his example does not reclaim, it at least inspires them with a respect for virtue; it compels them at least to acknowledge that there are still some righteous men upon earth; it repairs the injury which is done to the sacred character in the public estimation by unworthy Ministers, and rescues it from the contempt into which it is fallen by the irregularity of their manners; it corrects, at least, the censures and derisions which profane men are continually throwing out upon the sacred ministry; it adds, if I may be allowed to say it, honor to the character. For it is, my Reverend Brethren, against us, chiefly, that the world delights to level its most poignant darts; it forgives nothing in a profli-

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gate pastor; the more he appears to love it, to be attached to it, the more he becomes the object of its satire, of its contempt, and indignation.

In one word, a godly Minister is one of the greatest blessings which God can give, or society receive. What were the mercies promised to the Israelites, by his Prophet, if they would return to him, and renounce the evil of their doings?—What?—the empire of nations?—the entire destruction of their enemies?—a cessation of the evils which afflicted, and of the calamities which overwhelmed, them?—a land flowing with milk and honey?—He had, it is true, in preceding ages, made these magnificent promises, but the possession of them had not been sufficiently powerful to confine the Israelites to the observance of his law, nor to prevent them from offering their homage to strange gods:—He renounces, then, these splendid promises, so admirably calculated to make an impression upon a people, whose actions were all suggested by carnal and worldly motives; but it is only for the purpose of making them a promise unspeakably greater, infinitely more precious:—"Turn, O backsliding Israel, saith the "Lord, and I will bring you to Zion, and give "you pastors according to mine heart, which shall "feed you with knowledge and understanding." Raise up, O God, faithful priests in thy Church, and pastors according to thine heart. We ask not, Father, an end of the calamities with which thou afflictest us, the cessation of wars and of tumults,

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happier seasons, the return of abundance and of prosperity:—give us holy pastors, and with them thou wilt give us every thing!

I comprise the substance and utility of this exhortation in one reflection; I can neither singly destroy nor save myself; from the moment I became one of the Lord's Ministers, I have been either a scourge in his hands for the affliction of men, or a blessing sent down from heaven for their salvation.

How powerful a motive to fidelity in the discharge of my duty, to vigilance over my conduct, to zeal in my ministry, to hope or dread in the expectation of the second coming of Jesus Christ, who will present to me the souls he had entrusted to my care, either as my condemnation, if they have perished, or as my glory and crown, if, through my ministry, they are admitted to life and salvation!

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CHARGE II.

ON PROPRIETY OF CHARACTER.

They brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. As it is written in the Law of the Lord, every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.

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CHARGE II.

ON PROPRIETY OF CHARACTER.

IT was prescribed in the Law of Moses, that every first-born among the Jews should be dedicated to the service of the temple and the altar; or, as it is expressed by St. Luke, "called holy to the Lord."

Christ Jesus, the first-born among his brethren, represented by the first-born among the Jews, fulfilled this law, and explained what was figurative and mysterious in it. His consecration to the altar is the foundation of our holy ministry; we are, as it were, the first-born of the new-covenent; succeeding, in this instance, to the Jewish privileges.

We, who are an holy priesthood, are separated from the world, that we may avoid all profane intercourse with it; that we may so devote ourselves to the offices of Religion, as never afterwards to desert the sanctuary, in order to enter into "the tents of ungodliness."

The demeanor of the Clergy ought not, it is true, to be marked by unsocial rigor, and forbidding austerity: called, as we are, to bring sinners to salvation, and, as their visible angels, to con-

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duct them, we must seem in some degree, to imitate their customs, and adopt their manners.

Our ministry, indeed, necessarily occasions an intercourse with men; and if we would avoid all society with sinners, we must, as the Apostle speaks, "go out of the world;" but the spirit of the Christian priesthood leads us to conquer its temptations, by withstanding, and not, by personal flight, to escape them.

It is not, indeed, the love of the world which pleases by its kindness, and engages by its attentions, that I shall now either combat with argument, or reprehend with severity. No! it is that love of the world which exposes us to shame, which familiarizes us to dissipation, dishonors the priesthood, and gives offence to every pious mind; it is that powerful attachment to its cares and pleasures, which weans us from the holy duties of the sanctuary; it is that useless, idle, worldly life, which hurries us from one folly to another; enchains us to the conviviality of sinners, to the delights of their conversation, and the allurements of their voluptuousness; and leads us, by imperceptible degrees, from the engagements of the world to its amusements, from its amusements to its dangers, and from its dangers to its sins*. Now nothing, surely, is so incompatible

* "If practical Christian Piety and Benevolence, and Self Government, with constant Zeal to promote them all upon

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with the holiness of our calling, and the spirit of our ministry, as this life of dissipation, of perpetual engagements, of general inattention, pursued, it may be, without the remotest design of evil. Let us illustrate this truth :—it is sufficiently important of itself to form, not a principal part, but the sole object, of this exhortation.

The spirit of our ministry is a spirit of Separation from the World; of Prayer; of Labour, of Zeal; of Knowledge; of Piety :—let us observe each of these characteristics. Now, they all become extinct amidst worldly avocations, and secular engagements.

I. A spirit of Separation from the World. I mention this first: the ministerial office consecrates us to whatever concerns the reality, or the appearance, of Religion, and exempts us, at the same time, from a discharge of many of the public offices of society. From the period we are ordained we cease in one sense, to be citizens and members of the state: united with other men, by general duties, to its interests, we form a separate

Earth, are not the first and chief Qualities, which your Parishioners and acquaintance will ascribe to you; if they will speak of you as noted on other accounts, but pass over these articles; and when asked about them be at a loss what to say, excepting possibly that they know no harm of you; all is not right: nor can such a Clergy answer the design of its institution any where; or even maintain its ground in a country of freedom and learning, though a yet worse may in the midst of slavery and ignorance."—Abp. Secker.

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people. It is not that we plead exemption from obedience to the laws, and "the powers that are ordained of God;" we are to exhibit to the rest of men an example of allegiance; we do not cease to be members of the state, because we are not called upon to discharge the civil offices it requires of the rest of its members. The celebration of the Ordinances of Religion becomes our chief, and, almost, our only, duty; works of piety and charity, as far as is in our power, our indispensable obligations, thereby recommending our characters, and adorning our lives; the study of the Holy Scriptures, our highest pleasure, and professed avocation.

In a Minister of the Gospel, then, every thing is holy and separated from common use: a Clergyman ought to be distinguished by inherent gravity, the more readily to command respect from others, and by that degree of veneration which is necessary to give solemnity to his admonitions, and effect to his exhortations.

II. The spirit of our ministry is, in the second place, a Spirit of Prayer*: prayer is the ornament of the priesthood, the leading principle of our character; without prayer, a Minister is of no use to the Church, nor of any advantage to mankind: he sows, and God gives no encrease; he preaches, and his words are only like "sounding brass, or

* Vide, Charge XIV.

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tinkling cymbal:" he recites the praises of God, "whilst his heart is far from him." It is prayer alone, then, which gives the whole strength and efficacy to our different administrations; and that man ceases, if I may use the expression, to be a public Minister, from the time he ceases to pray: it is prayer which supplies him with consolations in all his labours; and he celebrates the Ordinances of Religion as the hireling performs his work—he considers them as a heavy task, or a severe imposition—if prayer doth not assuage its troubles, or console him for the want of success.

It will not be considered a deviation from the subject to examine—Whether, after departing from a profane assembly, where many dangerous objects have fastened on your mind—whether, after withdrawing from a scene of noise and riot, where every thing was unlike Religion, you felt in yourself those dispositions to piety, and attachments to godliness, by which a Christian minister should, invariably, be distinguished—whether your mind did not hold a closer converse with the world than with God—and whether, of course, your ministry, which ought to be a ministry of reconciliation and of life, will not become a ministry of condemnation and of death? Appeal to your own hearts. As soon as the world shall have extinguished in you the spirit of prayer, you will lose, by little and little, all regard to the duty, and all delight in the exercise, of it; you will perform it seldom; you will be careless and irreverent

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whilst you are employed in your devotions, and will soon entirely neglect to fulfil them;—you, whose indispensable duty it is, "to weep between "the porch and the altar," for the sins of your people, you will not even be concerned for your own: you will extenuate the vanities, and justify the pleasures, of the world, by partaking of them; and instead of alarming your piety, and awakening your zeal, they will flatter your taste, and corrupt your innocence*.

III. The spirit of our ministry is also a spirit of Labour; the priesthood is a laborious dignity; the Church, whose ministers we are, is a vine, a field, an harvest, a building not yet finished, an holy warfare; all which expressions indicate trouble, and imply diligence; they are all so many symbols of application and industry. A Clergyman is placed in the Church, as our first parent was in paradise, to till, and to defend it.

Thus, a Minister of the Gospel is accountable to society for his time: every part which he em-

* "I do not say that Recreations, lawful in themselves, are unlawful to us; or that those which have been formerly prohibited by ecclesiastical rules, merely as disreputable, may not cease to be so by change of custom. But still *not all things lawful are expedient*, and certainly these things, further than they are in truth requisite for health of body, refreshment of mind, or some really valuable purpose, are all a misemployment of our leisure hours, which we ought to set our people a pattern of filling up well. A Minister of God's word, attentive to his duty, will neither have leisure for such dissipations, public or domestic, nor liking to them.—Abp. SECKER.

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ploys in frivolous and unnecessary engagements, all the days that he passes in folly and dissipation, all are days and moments which he owes to the salvation of his brethren, and for the just application of which he must answer at the judgment-seat of Christ. His leisure, his occupations, his talents, are consecrated possessions, the joint heritage of his flock, which ought to be invariably adapted, and judiciously applied, to produce the amendment of sinners, the confirmation of the doubtful, and the perseverance of the righteous.

Surely, then, a Christian Minister ought not to be employed in going with idle curiosity, from house to house, from one scene to another. What! shall he consume his valuable time in ease and indolence! not only reproachful to his character as a Clergyman, but even, in general estimation, improper in any one who has the pre-eminence of an intelligent, or the virtue of a moral, being? You! a man of God, an interpreter of his law, his ambassador among men—will you forget your title, your calling, his interests, his glory, and your own?—and will you depreciate your dignity by a conduct which renders you, not only the disgrace of the Church, but the very bane of civil society, and an object of contempt in the eyes of those "who see nothing" in Religion "that they should desire it?" Every state hath its peculiar duties: the magistrate, the soldier, the merchant, the artisan, all have their several employments; a worldly Minister, whose cares, it might be ex-

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pected, would increase in proportion as the vices of men are multiplied, *he* alone hath no serious employment; he passes his days, if not in indolence, at least in cares foreign from his profession: and the life which ought to be the most occupied, and the most respectable in society, becomes the most disgraceful and contemptible.

So long as their are sinful creatures to reclaim—ignorant people to instruct—weak men to support—and gainsaying unbelievers to convince—ought a Minister of the Gospel to be immersed in reproachful avocations? It is related in the Sacred Writings, that Nehemiah occupied in building the temple, was solicited by the officers of the King of Persia to meet them in the plain of Ono, to renew a covenant with them; but this holy man, engaged in so pious an undertaking, and not thinking himself warranted in interrupting it on so slight an occasion, replied—"I am doing a great work, "so that I cannot come down: why should the "work cease whilst I leave it?" Is a Minister, occupied in repairing the spiritual edifice of the Church, in raising a temple to the living God in the hearts of men, charged with a work of less importance? And what should be his reply to those, who, under frivolous pretences, would engage him in the folly of the world? What—but the wise answer of the Jewish chief—"I am "doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: "why should the work cease whilst I leave "it?" What more worthy of his ministry, and

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more respectable in the eyes of men, then not to suffer himself to be diverted, by the most importunate solicitations, from the duties of his calling? than to act upon the persuasion, that all the time which he unnecessarily gives to the world, is so much time which he alienates from the building of the holy Jerusalem, and which delays the accomplishment of the work of God upon earth?

IV. In the fourth place, the spirit of our ministry is a spirit of Knowledge. "The lips of the "priest," says the Scripture, "should keep know-"ledge, and the people should seek the law at "his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord "of Hosts." We are commanded to read, with attention, the Sacred Volume, devoting to it all the labour of application, and fatigue of study, which the profound subjects contained in it demand; we are to be supported by the bread of life, derived from the heavenly writings; we are to adorn the inward part of our souls with the law of God, as the Jewish priests ornamented the outside of their garments. The Holy Scriptures are the substance, the foundation, of the Christian priesthood. The Ministers of the Gospel have been sometimes compared to the two great lights which are placed in the firmament, to rule over the day, and over the night; over the day, in directing the faith and confirming the piety of Christians; and over the night, in enlightening the darkness of error, and expelling the evils of unbelief. We are the interpreters of the law, appointed of God to

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resolve the doubts of his people, and to make known his will; the guardians of the Church, in the midst of the schisms which divide, of the troubles which afflict, and of the malignity which distracts it.

Fulfil now, if it be possible, these important duties, in the midst of pursuits which alienate, and of engagements which corrupt, the mind; for the knowledge required of a Clergyman is essential to, and inseparable from, a right and conscientious discharge of the sacred ministry. Now, nothing is more adverse to the love of study, than the love of the world; its pleasures and dissipations first suppress, and afterwards extinguish, the taste for reading, and the love of meditation; if we would possess and indulge an inclination to read, we must have a mind accustomed to think, to meditate, to be collected within itself; we must feel an ardent desire progressively to advance in useful learning, and professional knowledge; we must so arrange our life, and regulate our time, as to be able to give an account to ourselves, whether the parts of the day appointed for serious study and ministerial avocations, be uniformly applied to the intended purpose. For the want of this proper arrangement of time, and the right application of it, we see some Clergymen more conversant with the nature of diversions, of amusements, and of secular business, than with their professional duties: hence too many, who, by an ignorance of their profession, disgrace the sacred character. When

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once study is neglected, piety declines. The love of books, alone, my Reverend Brethren, can render you superior to the love of diversions; and so long as you do not find within yourselves a resource for indolence, the diversions of the world will, it is too probable, become essential to your happiness; you will not be able to live without them. In vain you may prescribe to yourselves fixed limits, and certain rules; in vain you may form resolutions of appropriating your time in part to your studies, and in part to your amusements: the love of the world will encrease every day, and in proportion as it encreases, the love of books will decline, and knowledge, professional knowledge, will cease to be estimable. Not only so, but your dislike to the study of the Holy Scriptures will hourly gain ground; you will not be able to support a moment of severe application, or serious reading; and idleness and dissipation will have such an ascendancy over your pursuits and habits, that whatever remains of your profession will serve but to reproach and condemn you.

V. The spirit of our ministry is, in the last place, a spirit of Piety. By a spirit of piety, I mean, not only innocence of manners, but that peace of conscience, that love of God, which the very appearance of evil disquiets and alarms: the spirit of piety is the great support of our ministry. We may be said to live under its sacred influence. In the midst of our congregations, in the preaching of

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the word, in private prayer, and in the study of the Scriptures, we employ our time; and if such pursuits fail to maintain in our hearts the love of God, and to produce the most salutary effects on our conduct, wretched men that we are, "who "shall deliver us from the wrath to come!"

A life in which the love of the world is predominant, is incompatible with that dignified and edifying piety, which should be the distinguishing characteristic of the sacred ministry; it is this spirit of piety alone which can ensure to us utility. For, after having freely mixed in the diversions and follies of the world, can you appear in a Christian pulpit impressed with a sense of the importance of the Gospel, and zealous for its success? With what face can you speak of the perils to which we are exposed in the world, of the snares which the Devil lays to beguile our innocence, of the necessity of prayer, of vigilance, of the account we are to render of an unprofitable life, and of all those evangelical graces which are indispensably requisite to adorn our christian character, when scarce a vestige of them can be discerned in your own? in order to "preach Christ, and him crucified," we, like the Apostles, must be "crucified with Christ," dead to the affections and lusts of the world; in order to inspire a love of God, and of the things of heaven, we must possess that love ourselves; in order to impress the hearts of our hearers, we must be actuated by similar impressions. Now, should you even

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speak in the pulpit with an apparent zeal, should you pronounce the most lively, affecting, and eloquent, expressions, in what view do you wish to be considered by your hearers? What alternate emotions of shame, of pity, and contempt, will they not feel, when they hear you deplore the prevailing degeneracy of morals? Will not your lamentations sound in their ears as the artificial lamentations of a theatre? You will, it may be, appear to them as having acted your part well; and all the holiness, all the majesty, all the terror of the Gospel, will be no more in their estimation, than a profane exhibition of despicable vanity; no more than the result of a classical judgment, and a refined taste.

It is not easy, indeed, to support, in the midst of the world, all the decorum of our ministry. Success in our calling is only attached to ardor of zeal, and innocence of manners. The appearance of a Minister of the Gospel in places of public diversions, common prudence, therefore, dictates should be rare. In exhibiting ourselves in every place of entertainment, we lose the reverence which is interwoven with our character: it is difficult to be every moment on our guard;—and the smallest deviation from the path of propriety, is misrepresented by calumny, and exaggerated by malevolence, into a sin of the deepest dye. It is easy to lose, it is difficult to preserve, our respectability, when we enter into the public amusements of life; and, although we do not imitate

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the manners, and pursue the irregularities we see, we assuredly, render our vocation less useful, and our virtues suspicious.

Let us, then, endeavour to extinguish in our hearts an attachment to the world and to its vanities. Having devoted ourselves to the service of God, having sincerely resolved to cast off the love of sublunary things, let us address ourselves to the Almighty, in the language of good old Simeon, —"Lord, now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace," from the profane engagements of the world, "since our eyes have seen thy salvation."

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CHARGE III.

ON ZEAL.

When he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them out of the Temple.

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CHARGE III.

ON ZEAL.

THE first office of our Lord's ministry in Jerusalem was an exercise and display of zeal against the abuses which dishonour the glory of his Father, and the sanctity of his Temple. That divine meekness, which had hitherto distinguished his whole conduct, was, on this occasion, changed into an holy severity. He could not endure a public offence, which insulted Religion in the Lord's sanctuary. In vain did the Pharasees tolerate this abuse, in vain was it supported by universal and ancient custom; these seem the very considerations which awakened his indignation; and the more difficult and dangerous the remedy appeared, the less delay and caution did he use in abolishing this profanation of the temple.

The first example which our Lord hath left to his Ministers in the public exercise of their profession, is observable in the zeal which he exhibited against those vices that insult the glory of God, and profane the holiness of religion. He sends us, indeed, as lambs, who are to be silent and gentle in the midst of ill-treatment; but who are directed

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to raise our voice, and "to cry aloud," when the glory of the Lord, whose ministers we are, is disparaged by the negligent, affronted by the careless, and contemned by the profligate. He disapproved, it is true, the zeal of the two disciples who called for fire from heaven on an unbelieving city; but he blamed only their unrestrained indignation, and unhallowed bitterness: He condemned the zeal which would punish rather than reclaim, and taught us, that, without charity, zeal is no more than violence of temper, and not an impulse of grace.

I this day propose to your attention, that a true, religious zeal, is essentially requisite in the character of a Christian Minister. And, then, why this zeal is so seldom found among us.

I. From the period in which the Church has associated us to the holy ministry, we become "labourers together with God," for the salvation of our brethren; we, in some measure, enter into the priesthood of the blessed Jesus, who became a priest for the purpose of destroying the dominion of sin, of restoring to his Father the glory of which the malice of men had robbed him, and of forming a spiritual, faithful people, an assembly of saints, to glorify him throughout the earth.

Thus, a Minister of the Gospel is charged with the interests of the Lord, and with the holiness of

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men: his prayers, his desires, his studies, his exertions, are all to be directed to the salvation of his brethren, as to their only end; whatever does not relate to this grand object is foreign to the design of his vocation; his time should be employed, and his talents devoted, to induce men to "worship their Father in spirit and in truth;" he who is embarrassed with other cares, renounces the dignity of his high calling.

Elijah ascending to heaven, and leaving the spirit of his zeal to his disciple Elisha, was a type of Christ, who, after having sat down at the right hand of his Father, sent the spirit of zeal upon his disciples, which was to be the seal of their mission and the credential of their ministry; and, in consequence, to reform mankind, and to carry to all nations the knowledge of salvation, and the love of the truth. No sooner were they filled with the Holy Ghost, than these men, before so timid, and so diligent to conceal themselves from the fury of the Jews, despised danger, and defied punishment: they bare testimony in presence of the high priests, of the resurrection of Jesus, and "departed from the council, rejoicing to be thought "worthy to suffer shame for his name."

But the ardour of their zeal could not be confined to the land of Judea; they went from country to country, from nation to nation; they spread themselves throughout the extremities of the earth; they preached "the foolishness of the cross" to

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the most polished of all people, whose boast was in the power of their eloquence, and the excellence of their philosophy. The obstacles, which every where presented themselves to their zeal, far from discouraging, confirmed their resolution, and enflamed their piety: the whole world conspired against them; and, in the midst of punishment, and in the sight of death, "they cannot," they say, "but speak what they have heard and seen." Such was the spirit of the priesthood, and of the apostleship which they had received.

Consider, now, to what we are dedicated, in receiving imposition of hands. The Church, it is true, doth not require each of us to preach the covenant of grace and mercy to barbarous nations, and to sprinkle with our blood the most distant countries, in order that we may disseminate the Gospel, and lead to a knowledge of its author, people who have never heard his name. No! What is required of us is, to watch, lest the enemy of mankind sow tares in this sacred field; to cultivate the plants which our heavenly Father hath there planted.

Now, should we deserve to bear the name of the Ministers of the Holy Jesus, if we could, unmoved, perceive iniquity and sin predominant among men —faith dead—holiness extinct—God almost unknown among us,—and Christians, the peculiar people, dishonouring the Redeemer, by excesses, which, in them who have never "named the name of Christ," would excite a blush?

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Whence comes it, that the desolation of Christ's heritage, of which we are every day witnesses, doth not sensibly more affect us? Whence is it, that we think ourselves discharged from our obligations, when we have repeated, often without devotion, the prayers which the Church requires of us? Can we, as the Ministers of the Lord, suffer our brethren, who are the living temples of the Holy Spirit, to perish? Is not the most essential of our obligations that into which all the rest are resolved, the edification, and the salvation of men? The Church doth not acknowledge, in the sacred profession, idle labourers, the work of which is committed to us all; for a Clergyman, who is of no use to society, is an usurper of the priesthood: he hath no farther right to the title of a Minister of the Gospel, than as he hath a zeal for its duties.

II. Whence comes it, that zeal for the temple of the Lord, this holy ardour for the salvation of men, this lively desire to extend the kingdom of God, this poignant grief to see his doctrine despised, and the greatest part of mankind going the way that leads to destruction; whence comes it, that these dispositions, so congenial to our vocation, so honourable to our ministry, so common, formerly, among the first preachers of the Gospel, are now so seldom to be found among the Pastors of the Church! Whence comes it, I again enquire, that this zeal more necessary at this day than ever, should seem extinct in the greatest part

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of those, who, it might be expected, would be invigorated by its principle, and enlivened by its ardour.

The Church is, with one description of men, a mere state of convenience; they enjoy its revenues from the patronage of the great, or the patrimony of their families; and are, therefore, they think, authorized to lead an indolent and voluptuous life; they consider their situation as a privilege which exempts them from the laborious duties of the ministry; and leave to the lower order of the Clergy, I had almost said, all concern for God's glory, for the honour of the Church, and for the salvation of those souls for whom Christ died. We might, therefore, conclude, that labourers are sent by compulsion into the Gospel-field; and that the Lord's Ministers need neither be prompted by love nor stimulated by zeal: we might, therefore, conclude, that to promote the work of Redemption, to aid the grand scheme which the Son of God came into the world to execute, was reserved for those whom indigence and poverty compelled to be employed in it.

Now, by partaking so abundantly of the revenues of the Church, are you thereby exempted from the obligations of your profession? When you entered into the Ministry, did the Church confer upon you the privilege of being indolent? or did it include you in the number of its labourers and its Ministers? How! Because you have been more fortunate, though, perhaps, less deserving,

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than other men; because the Church hath blessed you with its treasures, are you to be disobedient to its commands, and negligent of its duties? The abundance which you possess, as it would add authority to your remonstrances, and weight to your persuasion, ought to stimulate you to high exertions in the discharge of your ministerial engagements, and not to become a pretence for entrusting the salvation of souls to the care of others. Whether our ecclesiastical situation be exalted or obscure, it is equally incumbent on us to fulfil the ministry we have received of the Lord. The great Apostle considered it as a cause of glorying, and of the success of his apostleship, to have preached the Gospel without reward. To this noble disinterestedness, he attributed the abundant fruits which the Word of God had produced among mankind, by his ministry.

And indeed, does not a godly Pastor, who at once administers to the wants of the body, and is attentive to the salvation of the soul, excite a veneration for a profession, calculated to render those who have embraced it, liberal in the distribution of the emoluments they receive from it? With what blessings does a Minister of this character see his labours accompanied? What an impression do his words and his exhortations make, upon hearts already prepared, by his liberality, for the reception of the Gospel! Men reverence a Religion so compassionate towards the unhappy: and they are equally affected with the blessings they receive from it, and with the sins they have committed against it.

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A second cause of want of zeal is the cold and languishing state of the heart; it is the want of love towards God, and of charity towards men. In vain do we flatter ourselves with unimpeachable regularity; in vain do we challenge the acuteness of enquiry to investigate our conduct; we are, notwithstanding, dead in the sight of God; the love of God, which is inseparable from the love of our neighbour, is extinct in our heart: THE VITAL PRINCIPLE IS WANTING. Did we, indeed, love God,—were we impressed with a sense of our duty to promote his glory, bound, as we are, by the spirit of our ministry,—is it possible that we could perceive, with indifference, his Majesty every day, and in every place, insulted by the excess, and outraged by the profligacy, which pervade the whole earth?

What are the characters, then, by which we may know how the principle of the love of God operates in the heart of a Minister of the Gospel? He is impressed with a lively sorrow when he sees the sovereign of the universe provoked, and his law contemned, by the greater part of those, whom, with the most gracious design, and for the most benevolent purpose, the great Creator called into being: he is actuated by an ardent desire to confine to God alone the worship which is due to his Supreme Majesty, and inexhaustible goodness; he is impelled by an holy zeal to deliver up himself, to render his feeble talents subservient to extend the glory, and exalt the name, of Jehovah, and to inspire all men

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with the same affections of fear, of love, of thanksgiving, which preside in his own heart. We cannot love an object, and be insensible to the insults offered to the object of our love: and we cannot be possessed of such sensibility, without employing every power, and exerting every faculty, to prevent, or, at least, to avert them, especially when, independent of the obligation common to all, our ministry enjoins it, as a personal and indispensable duty; a duty which is the very foundation, and which comprises in it all the other obligations, of our sacred calling.

And although our zeal should not be productive of any very unusual effects; although the truths which we preach to sinners should fall upon hearts dead to all sense of Religion, we should possess the consolation of having contributed to the glory of God, by endeavouring, as much as possible, to bring all men to a knowledge of the truth. The Almighty doth not always comfort his Ministers with the appearance of immediate and visible success, lest man should attribute to himself that effect which is produced only by his grace: but his word always works in secret; the holy seed, which seems to have fallen upon an unprepared soil, is not entirely lost, but will, sooner or later, bring forth fruits of salvation. God has his moments: and it is not for us to arraign his wisdom, or attempt to prescribe bounds to his power: His spirit works where, and when he pleases: we see the changes he produces; but the hidden admirable

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ways by which he produces them, no one knows: they are the profound mysteries of Providence, which will only be revealed in the great day of the Lord. Of us he demands solicitude, labour and toil; he reserves to himself the increase: he commands us to "teach, to exhort, to reprove; to "cry aloud, and not to spare;" on himself alone depends the entrance of the good seed of the word into the heart duly prepared to receive it*.

But it is not the apprehension of want of success which makes us negligent of our duty. No! the true reason is, we ourselves are not impressed with a sense of God's glory, and of the blessings of salvation. And indeed, how should we, as St. James observes, be affected with the interests of the Lord's glory, whom we do not see, so long as we are insensible to the wants of our brethren, whom we do see? Can we, without emotion, without reaching

* "Never despair, nor be immoderately grieved, if your success be small: but be not indifferent about it: do not content yourselves with the indolent plea that you have done your duty, and are not answerable for the event. You may have done it as far as the law requires: yet by no means have discharged your consciences. You may have done it conscientiously, yet not with the diligence or address that you ought. And as we are seldom easy in other cases, when we fail of our end; if we are so in this, it doth not look well. At least consult your hearts upon this point. And if you have been deficient, beg of God pardon, grace, and direction; endeavour to do more for your people: Consult your brethren about the means. Conversation of this nature will much better become Clergymen when they meet, than any which is not relative to their profession."—Abp. SECKER.

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out a hand to assist them, perceive those whom we love, perishing; especially our brethren in Christ Jesus, over whom we are commanded to be vigilant, for whom we must give a strict account, and whose fall will bring ruin and condemnation on ourselves.

Are we then, sensibly affected when we observe so many, who call themselves Christians, walking in the paths that lead to destruction? Public morals every day become more corrupt, *because* the zeal of the Lord's Ministers waxeth cold. The generality of sinners live unconcerned in the midst of their vices, *because* they no longer hear those terrific calls, which are animated by the spirit of God, are alone capable of awakening them from the sleep of sin. We look upon profligacy of manners as an evil without remedy, which had its beginning with the world, and will continue to the end of it: we think that the morals of to-day have been the morals of all ages. The corruption of Christianity, my Reverend Brethren, arises from the want of zeal, and from the indolence which pervades its teachers. The Church would soon re-assume its original splendour, were we only actuated by the same spirit as the pastors who planted it: all would change, were we changed ourselves. This universal profligacy of manners, then, is so far from justifying our insensibility, that it loudly testifies against us, and renders us still more criminal.

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But we excuse our indolence, by giving it the specious names of moderation and discretion; under a pretence that our zeal is to be prescribed within proper limits, we extinguish it altogether. Let us not deceive ourselves: the truths of which we are the interpreters, cannot please the world, because they condemn the world. When, indeed, we address the lower classes of men; we reprobate their irregularities; we display before their eyes the terrors of the Lord, with the most unqualified denunciations, and, often, without that mildness which prudence suggests, and charity prescribes. But, with the Great, we, as the Apostle speaks, change our language: hardly dare we shew to them, at a distance, truths which they dislike. Our chief object is, not to correct their vices, but to avoid incurring their displeasure. We persuade ourselves, that we ought not, by an indiscriminate zeal, to deprive the Church of the credit of their attachment, and the advantage of their support; as if men plunged in vice could promote the work of God; as, if, to escape the imputation of indiscretion, we must necessarily "speak smooth things, and prophesy deceit."

The fear of men, then, may suppress in us the love of the truth, and zeal for the salvation of souls. To which may be added another cause, but which, I trust in God, cannot often be attributed to the Clergy,—I mean irregularity of conduct.

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It cannot excite surprise that a Minister, whose heart is the receptacle of criminal passions, should find himself without power, without inclination, without courage, when it becomes his duty to reprehend and correct the like passions in other men. What impression of zeal, and what sensations of horror, can the commission of those vices, in our fellow creatures, which we love, and in which we indulge ourselves, produce in our hearts? Thus, when our situation requires us to publish the glad tidings of salvation, and to censure, with freedom, notorious offences—what coldness, what constraint, what outward shame, and inward remorse! No, my brethren, our private conduct ought not to blush at our public censures. A Clergyman, who belies by his immoralities, the truths which he preaches, causes more infidels and unbelievers than all the writings which hatred of the Gospel can dictate, and all the arguments that the love of vice can produce. Expressions, then of zeal against profligacy are not becoming, nor serviceable, in the Church, but in the character, and from the mouth, of virtue. "Why," says the Psalmist, "dost thou preach my laws, and take my cove-"nant in thy mouth, whereas thou hatest to be re-"formed?" Will the holy spirit, do you think, speak by a mouth polluted with indecent and profane conversation? Will he work the work of righteousness and sanctification, by a worker of iniquity and hypocrisy? Will he employ a Minister of abandoned morals, as his instrument in promoting the salvation of his people?

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But the Church is not to be reproached with the irregularities of its Ministers. What the Clergy are to be warned against, is, that state of lukewarmness*, and of negligence, in the discharge of their duty, which destroys the efficacy of it. And, indeed, how can you, my Reverend Brethren, appear among your flocks, animated with the love of God, and actuated by a desire to promote the salvation of men—you, who feel no solicitude, either for your own salvation, or the salvation of those over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers? If you perform your ministry with indifference and reluctance, you will leave the same dispositions in the hearts of those who hear you. A faithful Minister is

* "Clergymen, who are serious in their whole behaviour, and the care of their families also, are often too unactive amongst their people: apt to think that if they perform regularly the ordinary offices of the church, exhort from the pulpit such as will come to hear them, and answer the common occasional calls of parochial duty, they have done as much as they need, or well can, and so turn themselves to other matters: perhaps never visit some of their parishioners; and with the rest enter into the same sort of talk that any one else would do. Now St. Paul saith, he *taught* the Ephesians both *publicly and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;* and *ceased not to warn every one day and night.* He also commands Timothy to *preach the word, and be instant in season and out of season;* at stated times and others: not forcing advice upon persons, when it was likelier to do harm than good: but prudently improving less favourable opportunities, if no others offered. Thus, unquestionably should we do. And a chief reason, why we have so little hold upon our people is, that we converse with them so little, as watchmen over their souls.—Abp. SECKER.

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uniformly distinguished by his zeal, his application, his patience, his labor to overcome the obstacles, which the world, the devil, the depravity of manners, oppose to the success of his ministry; and, too often, alas! notwithstanding his ardent zeal, and unremitted pains, he has the mortification of having "laboured in vain, and spent his strength for nought." What harvest, then, can a slothful, negligent, labourer expect, from a field to which he hath put only a feeble, and languishing hand, and which seems to have been entrusted to him, rather as a refuge from fatigue, than to be the object of unremitted application? What spectacle so afflicting to the Church, as that of one of its Pastors, bound by the most solemn obligations to prosecute his calling with diligence and fidelity, careless and indolent! He, to whom is entrusted the enlargement of the kingdom of God, the reclaiming of sinners from the evil of their ways—the improvement of the wise,—and the edification of the virtuous!

But there is another cause of the want of zeal, in some of the Ministers of the Gospel, which is, a persuasion, that they are not well calculated to discharge the public offices of Religion.

We every day meet with Pastors, whom a love of retirement, together with extreme diffidence of their talents, renders almost useless to the Church. They prefer the leisure of study, to the active discharge of their duty: they think it sufficient that

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they edify the Church, by their example, without supporting it by their labours, directed personally, and individually, to those over whom they are placed; that they be blameless in the eyes of men, without devoting their time to their amendment; in a word, that, by leading an irreproachable life, they are justified in neglecting the salvation of their brethren. They give themselves up wholly to reading and study; but will such application, however laudable in itself, and serviceable, as it may, occasionally, be in its effects, to the community at large, compensate for their neglect in performing the public services of their peculiar functions; or, for performing them with carelesness, and inattention? But you think you had better leave the obligations of your calling, to be fulfilled by those, who are more likely to benefit the hearers. We possess all requisite talents, when we have a love for our flock, and feel an ardent desire for their salvation: this is the treasure of which our Lord speaks, and whence "the Scribe, in-"structed for the kingdom of Heaven, draws trea-"sures new and old." Nothing is more opposite, says a Father of the Church*, to the spirit of the Priesthood, than an indolent and inactive life, which we are too apt to consider as the most desirable. *Nihil enim minus aptum est ad Ecclesiæ præfecturam quàm socordia & ignavia, quam alii exercitationem quandam admirabilem putant.*

Heavenly Father, remove, we beseech thee, from the hearts of thy Ministers, every obstacle which

* Chryostom.

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may hinder them from bringing mankind to the knowledge of the truth: animate them with that spirit of zeal and wisdom with which thou didst endow the first preachers of the Gospel: may thy Church perpetually abound with labourers, powerful in word and doctrine, whose only end may be thy glory, and the salvation of mankind; and who may esteem as nothing the opinions of men, so long as they are instruments in thy hands of extending thy kingdom, and accomplishing thy will! Amen.

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CHARGE IV.

ON BEING CALLED TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.

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CHARGE IV.

ON BEING CALLED TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

YOU recollect the words of our blessed Lord to his disciples, when he appeared to them, assembled together, after his resurrection: his design was to confirm their faith, by his presence, and to dispel their terror by his Gospel, which he bequeathed to them, as the blessed result of his victory, and the dearest pledge of his remembrance.

It was not sufficient to assure them that they should be ministers of his evangelical dispensation:—Go, I send you, teach all nations in my name. It was also necessary to raise their spirits, sunk and dejected as they were, by his passion and death, by inspiring them with high sentiments of that important and sublime ministry, in which they were soon to be employed. And to impress their mind with the utmost force, he compares their mission to his own,—"As my Father hath sent me, so send I you."

As though he had said to them;—As I have been upon earth the ambassador of my Father, so shall you be mine among men: as my Father was

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in me, reconciling the world unto himself, so shall I be in you, exercising myself a ministry of reconciliation; as they who have seen me, have seen the Father, they who see you, shall see me also; and ye shall be the representatives of my person upon earth, and a striking image of my power and authority; as the Father abode in me, doing all my works, so will I abide in you, and will baptize, will give the Holy Spirit, and will speak, before princes and kings. The Father hath placed me at his right hand, "and hath put all enemies under "my feet: ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judg- "ing the twelve tribes of Israel." The Father hath given evidence from on high, by appearing in the clouds: and I shall one day appear, on a cloud of glory, surrounded by all the heavenly spirits, to bear testimony of you, before the assembled world. In a word, as I have glorified my Father on earth, so shall I be glorified in you, by your confessing my name, and promulgating my doctrine: but, as the mission which I have received of my Father is the principle and foundation of all my authority and greatness, the mission with which I entrust you shall be alone the foundation of yours:—"As my Father hath sent me, so send I you." To this last reflection it is, that I confine the subject of this discourse. The high parellel presents us with sublime, and, at the same time, awful ideas, of our ministerial calling.

"Let no one," says the Apostle, "take this ho- "nour to himself, but he that is called of God, as

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" was Aaron." If Christ was sent of his Father, in order to begin his work, we are to be sent by Christ, in order to continue that same work; and as we are called to the same glorious ministry, it is proper that the marks of our vocation be the same. Now, were our Lord to appear this day in the midst of us, as he formerly appeared to his assembled disciples, could he say to each individual among us—" As my Father hath sent me, so have I sent you?"

I shall not attempt to prove that we ought to be called to this holy office of the priesthood, before we take legal possession of it, for in so doing, the legality of the call is implied; I had rather appeal to your conscience, and prevail with you to enquire of yourselves—Am I called? Is it the calling of Christ, or the voice of man, that has placed me in the sanctuary? Is this holy state, which I have chosen, the state to which the Almighty hath appointed me? Am I in my place, or do I occupy the place of another?—and, as Christ was sent by his Father, am I sent by him*?

* I entirely omit the first part of this discourse, since little advantage could be derived from it by a Protestant Clergyman; and likewise the second part, which relates to the approbation of the Pastor by the people. The Prelate eloquently asks, "If many parishes would not say of their Pastors, we will not have this man to preside over us? If the people among whom I have lived, had the choice of their minister, could I flatter myself that their choice would fall on me?" I may, I hope, without offence, be permitted to observe, that, in the appointment of ministers, it is greatly to be desired that the people over which

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That we may know whether we are called to the sacred ministry, we may judge from the innocence

the pastor is commissioned to preside, should be a person whom they approve. If, knowing his moral character, they justly dislike them; if, when they hear him in the Church, they are unanimous in their opinion, that, from his manner of reading and preaching, their Church and Communion will be deserted; or if, whatever be his qualifications, his voice is so weak that it cannot be heard; ought not every congregation to have the privilege of protesting against such nomination? A congregation cannot be happy in a Clergyman whom they despise; a congregation will never observe, uniformly and seriously, the Ordinances of Religion, under the ministry of a Clergyman, however exemplary his conduct, and excellent his discourses, whose elocution is such as to excite general dissatisfaction; and if the Church be large, and his voice low, it is impossible that those who cannot distinctly hear, should derive any benefit from the discharge of his public duty. It is greatly to be lamented, that there should be in our Church, and in our Church only, such abundant cause of complaint on these topics.

I would not be understood to mean, that every congregation ought to have the choice of its own Minister, God forbid! for a regulation so injudicious would banish from the Church every good, and introduce into it every evil. But it cannot, surely, be thought that the security of the Church, and the interests of the Gospel, are promoted by imposing upon a congregation a clergyman who is not calculated, in almost a single instance, to obtain the approbation, and ensure the affections, of his hearers. An appeal to the Diocesan, not originating in personal pique, in wanton caprice, or in previous attachment to a more popular preacher, but founded on impartial justice, and supported by incontrovertible reasoning, ought to be allowed. And sure I am, the greatest good would result from such a measure to the whole community: the State would receive from it a most powerful support; the Church would acquire such strength as to bid defiance to the insinuations of scepti-

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of our life, and from our attachment to our profession.

Now our conscience is the best evidence of the innocence of our life. But, as the irreproachable manners of the priesthood have been the subject of a former exhortation, I shall proceed to shew the necessity of an attachment to the holy functions of the sacred profession. Our Lord, at an early period of his life, withdrawing from the eyes of his parents, entered into the Temple, where he was found among the doctors, making already full proof of his ministry. Samuel, when a child, stood daily in the Temple before the Lord; and the Scripture observes, that he awoke from his sleep, when he thought that the commands of Eli, the High Priest, called him to the discharge of any duty which affected the decency and beauty of the Lord's Temple. This anticipated predilection, this previous attachment to the obligations of our vocation, has not, infrequently, appeared in those whom heaven pre-ordained for the service of the altar; and it hath always been considered as a sign of our calling, and a happy presage of our proficiency in it.

cism, and the combinations of schism; and Religion itself, by a more general and devout observance of its ordinances, would be more uniformly practised.

It would be well if the second part of Massillon's Discourse was seriously read by every Patron, before he presents to a living, and by every Incumbent before he nominates to a curacy, whether perpetual or stipendiary.

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But if you do not feel in yourselves a desire of being employed as the ambassadors of God; if you do not appear in your right place, when you are fulfilling the duties of your holy profession, judge ye yourselves, whether you are called into the Lord's vineyard? God implants in the heart a love for the service to which he calls; and better would it have been for you to have felt that it was not the ministry for which you were intended, than that you should possess a want of inclination for the performance of its duties. It is not necessary that a voice from heaven should say to you in secret, "the Lord hath not sent you;" your judgment, enforced by the dictates of your conscience, tells you so.

It is, farther, requisite, that, in dedicating yourselves to the ministry, you should possess purity of intention. "Our Lord came not to be "ministered unto," that is, to fill the highest places in the Synagogue,—"but to minister,—to "become all things to all men;" He came to declare the name of his Father; to save the lost sheep of the House of Israel; zeal, love, holiness, formed the essential and constituent parts of his ministry, Are you influenced by the same motives? Have you taken upon you the sacred character, in order to minister, to labour for the salvation of your brethren? Are you satisfied, in your own minds, as to the purity of your intentions? I pretend not to penetrate the inmost recesses of your heart: God knows them; and to him must the

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decision, ultimately, be referred; but, surely, every one, before he enters into the sacred ministry, should, impartially, and severely, enquire of himself, whether his motives are such as will be approved by that God, whose servant he becomes? If, then, we have not made the awful enquiry, let us this day enter into judgment with ourselves. What do I propose to myself, in that holy state into which I have entered? The salvation of souls —the defence of the Gospel—the destruction of the empire of the grand enemy of mankind? Have I chiefly, these laborious and momentous ends in view, by becoming a labourer in the Lord's vineyard? What would I appropriate to myself? What do I expect to meet with in the Church?—its riches, or its duties?—its dignities, or its labours?—the value of the fleece, or the salvation of the flock? What talents do I bring into this holy warfare?—A knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel—an interest in its success—reasoning, to convince—and eloquence, to persuade?—or, ignorance of the truth—unconcern about its reception—languor in its defence—and unskilfulness in its propagation.

It may be said, perhaps, that if you are promoted to ecclesiastical preferment, which your morals do not disgrace, it may be allowable to conclude, that you are entitled to it. But, to devote ourselves to the ministry of the Word, merely because we have the prospect of succeeding to preferment; because our expectations in the Church are more

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promising than in any other profession, or calling: because, through our family and friends, we may hope to arrive at an enviable state of comfort and independence; because, like the mother of the sons of Zebedee, our connections have previously solicited the highest places in the kingdom of heaven: in a word, to enlist under the banners of Christ, not because "he has the words of eternal life," but because he multiplies the loaves and fishes in the wilderness—is the motive laudable?—Is it "because we were moved by the Holy Ghost to "take upon us this office and administration?"

But after all, it is not sufficient to have the testimony of our conscience in our favour; we must farther examine, whether we have talents adapted to our situation, and whether we may justly presume, that we shall be of real utility in the Church? You can, perhaps, display all the talents which would distinguish you in the world; you can please, by your conversation, and engage, by your address: but what talents have you for the Lord's vineyard, to build, to plant, to pull down? When Moses was about to erect the tabernacle, every one brought splendid presents to contribute towards its construction,—gold, precious stones, purple, the skins of beasts. What can you contribute, on your part, towards the building of the heavenly tabernacle, the spiritual edifice of the Church? You may not bring gold and precious stones; for "all are not apostles, all "are not evangelists;" yet you will contribute

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something; and that which is the least splendid or brilliant, is not always the least useful.

Now, by what way can you become serviceable to the Church?—By your learning and your knowledge?—But perhaps, impatient of restraint, and averse to study, you have looked upon the priesthood as an exemption, if you should desire it, from the toil of reading, and the acquisition of knowledge. By your mode of delivery and gracefulness of elocution?—But eloquence must be founded in piety, if you would render that talent honourable to yourself, and advantageous to your flock; and what can be the advantage derived from your instructions, when you destroy it by your example? By your irreproachable conduct? But if, without offending against the rules of morality, you betray in your whole demeanor a love of the world, and an attachment to its vanities, how can you edify that world, whose maxims you adopt, and whose fashions you sanction? By your name, and the distinction which you bear in the world?—A celebrated name gives, without doubt, additional authority in the exercise of the ministry; but alas! the sole advantage which the Church can expect to derive from you, is, that your name will become an excuse for your irregularities, and for the misapplication you shall make of the Lord's patrimony. In fine, by the dignities which you cannot fail of possessing in the Church and which your birth and connections give you a right to expect?—But if by this motive only, you

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are influenced; if a mere name is to exalt you to sacerdotal dignity; if flesh and blood are to put you in possession of the priesthood of Melchizedec, which knows neither parents nor genealogy, your name will but serve to render an unworthy discharge of your duty more conspicuous:—you will carry into the sanctuary, pride, haughtiness, the very world, which has placed you in it.

What then can you offer to the Church, which it can apply to the glory of God, and the salvation of men? For this is its only view in the choice of its Ministers. The kingdom of God is, you know, a field which requires labourers; to be useless in it, is to occupy, unjustly, that soil which another would cultivate. If you find yourself unequal to the task, the Church has no need of you: far from being a support, you are but an incumbrance, and a reproach to it.

From what has been said, then, we ought all to enquire of our hearts—Does my mission resemble that of Jesus Christ—and hath he sent me as he was sent of his father? If you have entered into the ministry without being called to it, you will bear the character of a minister of the gospel, it is true, but it will be to you a character of reprobation; and in declaring that you were moved by the Holy Ghost to take it upon you, you will have "lied, not unto men, but unto God." I say nothing of the infinite evils occasioned by your intrusion into the Church; your labours without a bles-

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sing; your whole ministry without the approbation of him, who purchased the Church with his own blood; the loss of so many souls, whose salvation depended on the vigilance of a faithful Pastor, and which have perished through your fault; the righteous justly offended; the weak seduced; sinners confirmed in their iniquities: such is the gulph into which you precipitate yourselves, by entering into the sacred ministry, without a sense of its importance, and a determination to discharge, with conscientious fidelity, its several duties. But, my Brethren, "we hope better things of you:" we will not believe that you can, with impious boldness, contemn the commands of Heaven; that you have made choice of the temple of God, to profane, with more frequency, and less interruption, its holy mysteries; and that you have entered into the sheep-fold, in order to seize, with greater facility, and to destroy, with more success, the sheep which the Father hath purchased at the expence of his own blood. Let us, with all humility of mind and fervor of spirit, address ourselves unto the Lord, saying,—Grant, O God, that we may not be of the number of those who speak in thy name, but who speak not for thine honour; who prophesy out of their own hearts, and say, the Lord hath sent, when the Lord hath not sent, them. May we be worthy of that holy calling to which we are called! Blessed are those whom thou shalt choose to dwell in thine house; they shall be always praising thee. The cedars of Libanus, which thou hast planted, shall be watered

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with the dew of Heaven; they shall neither fear the burning heat, the mighty winds, nor the destroying tempests. But woe unto every plant which thou hast not planted. The wind shall pass over it, and it shall be gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more; it can expect no better lot than to be plucked up, and cast into the fire. God, of his mercy, grant that none of us may be of that number, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen!

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CHARGE V.

ON REFLECTION ON THE SUCCESS OF OUR MINISTRY.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.

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CHARGE V.

ON REFLECTION ON THE SUCCESS OF OUR MINISTRY.

THE reiterated advice which the Apostle addresses to his son Timothy, to "give attendance "to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, and not "to neglect the gift which is in him," is admirably calculated to supercede that careless disposition, and enfeebling negligence, to which we are prone by nature, and induced by habit. Defects, are, indeed, inevitable in the prosecution of our calling; by taking, therefore*, a review of your ecclesiastical conduct, by giving your attendance to reading, and your mind to reflection, you may remedy them in future. Our fervour abates, our spiritual powers decay, the man gets the better of the minister, by reflection, therefore, you will re-animate the languishing principle, and renew within you the original spirit, of your ministry. Lastly, the Clergy of this extensive diocese, have, in general,

* It may be proper to inform the reader, that it was a custom among the French Clergy, to assemble, at their Synods, in some religious house, called *the Retreat*, where their time was devoted to meditation, prayer, and the exposition of some parts of Scripture, for their mutual information. To this custom, MASSILLON, in these Charges, frequently alludes.

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need of examples: you will supply them with one, at once instructive to their minds, and attractive of their affections, by so examining your past life, as to enable you to fulfil your ministry with advantage to your several flocks.

I. The duties of our calling are so holy, and require such pious dispositions, that the most exemplary and godly Ministers cannot always exercise them with fervour of zeal, and purity of mind, without which, oblations are vain, and incense an abomination. We may be, frequently, in this state, without, almost, being conscious of it, and may, by such inattention and negligence, lose those gifts which give dignity to the ministry, and efficacy to its labours. How often do harshness and impatience take the place of zeal and of charity! How often do indolence, disgust, secret antipathies, sometimes personal dislikes, induce us to refuse that assistance to our flock, which *their* necessities, and *our* engagements, demand of us! How often, through the apprehension of being thought troublesome, and esteemed ridiculous, do we approve, perhaps imitate, the faults and errors we condemn, and forget, in a certain degree, the decorum, and the sanctity of our ministry!

Notwithstanding, the regular discharge of our duty conceals, even from our own minds, this part of our character, so humiliating to ourselves, and so injurious to our vocation, and does not leave us

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leisure to examine its rise, and contemplate its deformity. By being so inattentive to our deportment in our holy calling, we collect a treasure of wrath, unknown to ourselves; and, as ignorance of our state is the just punishment of our want of self-examination, the more regardless we are of our professional conduct, the greater is our consequent indifference; because the lights which were designed to warn us, and to open our eyes, go out, unperceived by us. And this, my Reverend Brethren, is a principal cause of the irregularity, and very culpable negligence, of many who take upon them the sacred profession. We are the light of the world; the smallest mist obscures this splendour; our faults become like eclipses, which intercept the bright beams of grace in the hearts of Christians, and leave in darkness, that part of the Church, which we were commanded to enlighten.

By examining ourselves with minute attention, by bringing before our eyes every part of our past conduct, by going through the whole course of our ministry, we shall discover the places, the occasions, the cicumstances, in which we acted improperly; we shall perceive that, notwithstanding the opinion of men, and the many encomiums they may pass on the external regularity of our behaviour, it is well, if we be holy, and faithful, Ministers, worthy to dispense the mysteries of God. The distance betwixt what we are, and what we ought to be, greatly humbles, and strikingly alarms us. We

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lament over our past miscarriages; we form many holy resolutions, many projects of a life more serious, more diligent more professional; we enter within ourselves, in order to ascertain the source of the evil, and to discover the secret propensities which have betrayed our vigilance, and facilitated our fall; we prepare, at a distance, previous precautions, and necessary measures, to prevent a fresh surprize: thus, we enter into our obligations fortified with new arms; we enter with less of that confidence, which always goes before a fall; but, at the same time, with greater security. The pilot, escaped from shipwreck, is more cautious in future; and warned, by the misfortunes which have befallen him, of the rocks on which he struck; apprehensive of the danger, and trembling for his safety, he is, in proportion, active and anxious to avoid them. "Bring your ways only to remem-" brance; see only how oft," in the discharge of your professional duties, "you have offended;" and you will perceive, not without surprize and sorrow, that the errors you discover in yourselves are too common among those, who are called to the holy ministry; and that the regret, and the change, produced by a frequent and serious examination, are not, alas! the general, and distinguishing, characteristics of the sacred profession. The greater part of those, to whom this examination is indispensable, finish their course as they had begun it. We have sometimes the consolation of seeing men, who, from being notorious sinners, become an example of regularity and piety, to their neigh-

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bourhood; but this is not so frequent among the clergy; what they once are, they are almost always.

II. But, although we should have been so happy as to fulfil our ministry in such a way as to edify the hearts, and improve the morals, of our several flocks, do we not feel within ourselves, that, by being constantly engaged in the service of the Church, the first fervor which devoted us to the ministry grows cool, that the holiness of our duties makes upon us, every day, still slighter impressions; and that we do but walk, with a feeble step, in the paths in which we at first ran, with a zeal so honourable to ourselves, and a celerity so beneficial to mankind?

This decrease of piety and fervor, observable in those who make the fullest proof of their ministry, is as a secret malady which undermines us, and which, by little and little, leads to decay. It is an evil, which, not shewing itself by visible and striking symptons, and, nevertheless, daily weakening our strength, is seldom opposed by any remedies sufficiently powerful to arrest its progress. Here skill has no other resource than to remove the patient into a purer air. Now it is, in withdrawing from the world, in retiring within ourselves, that we discover when our piety is languishing—when our zeal is growing cool—when our whole inward frame, being disordered, threatens us with decay. The longer we defer this self-examination, the more the evil gains ground; every thing around

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us encreases and exasperates it; the very observance of our sacred calling, far from rousing us from our supineness, is no other than a worn-out refuge, to which we have recourse, which, alas, instead of healing, aggravates the wound. A situation this beset with dangers; and it is still greater, because it does not impress terror, or awaken apprehension; we think the day of death at a distance; we comfort ourselves with certain desires of a more holy life, which sometimes overcome our lethargy, and leave us again to fall into it a moment afterwards. We think of ourselves what the disciples thought of Lazarus:—"Lord, if he sleep-"eth he shall do well:" but our Lord, who sees us such as we really are, judges of us, perhaps, very differently. "Then said Jesus, unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." They are not heinous offences which we have the most to fear: a foundation of Religion, a virtuous education, an established reputation of uniform conduct, veneration for the holiness of our ministry, may all conduce to preserve us from them: what we have most to guard against is, that the spirit of piety, so essential to our sacred calling, may not become extinct: that we may not go to sleep, in a state insensible to the joys of Heaven, accompanied with apparent regularity, and devoid of genuine religion. We do not perceive in our life any notorious sin; and we do not, at the same time, perceive, that a life which is not founded in piety, is itself sinful, in the eyes of God. In the hurry of the world, we see irregularities, from which we are

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exempt; we, therefore, conclude, that God is satisfied with us, because men are, or, at least, that they, in reason, might be. We say to ourselves, that we are not, we thank God, like such and such of our brethren; this secret comparison is soothing to our mind; it, perhaps, flatters our pride; and, destitute, as we are, of that spirit of faith, of that warmth of zeal, by which we ought to be animated, self-love does not cease to call our morals irreprehensible, to present to us a phantom of virtue, which encreases our satisfaction, and encourages our confidence. Then, my Reverend Brethren, it is, that the Holy Spirit addresses us:—"Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from thy lethar-"gy, and Christ shall give thee light." Enter into yourselves, bring before your eyes the whole course of your ministry;—reflection will suggest to you the degree of fervor, of piety, of charity, of disinterestedness, essential to the discharge of the duties of your sacred calling; you will then perceive what is the holiness God requires of you; you will look upon your apparent regularity, that appearance, that mere rind, of virtue, "as "filthy rags, and as an unclean thing." You will find yourselves in the presence of God, without light, and without life: the Almighty will speak unto your souls, and these dry bones, like those the Prophet saw, "shall come together at his "word,—O, ye dry bones, hear the word of the "Lord." You will become new men; you will feel yourselves, after a strict examination of your hearts, enflamed with a new fire; the Holy Spirit

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will strengthen you against every prevailing example, and every dangerous allurement, which had heretofore undermined your virtue, and weakened your piety: the success of your exhortations will correspond to the new vital principle which dictated them: you will see your flock awakened and renewed with yourselves; and the Blessed Spirit, influencing both Minister and people, will again declare,—"Behold, I make all things new!" What consolation to a Minister of the Gospel, to see the increase of the Word, in that portion of the Lord's field, which is committed to him, to see the souls of his hearers delivered from the tyranny of the devil, and the slavery of sin, and restored to him, who created and redeemed them! And, on the other hand, what an awful retrospect for a Pastor, who "is not dead while he liveth," when he perceives, that, during the course of his long ministry, he hath not withdrawn one soul from the ways of perdition! that he hath not corrected one vice, either general or personal, in his parish! that he hath not produced in it, any change! Will his life, irreproachable in the sight of men, comfort him, for having been useless in his sacred office? And may he not look for the cause of it in his own lukewarmness, in the coldness of his zeal, rather than in the depravity of his congregation? It was after our blessed Lord's departure from the wilderness, that he began his ministry; after withdrawing himself, from time to time, upon the mount to pray, that he continued it, and that he performed works, which no person before

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him had performed. This was not, it is true, necessary, "for the furtherance of the Gospel;" but his design was to leave a model of conduct, and to address all his Ministers, in the persons of the Apostles—"I have left you an exampel, that ye should do as I have done."

To these motives, so interesting in themselves, and so calculated to affect the hearts of all who are dedicated to the sacred profession, permit me to add one other reflection.

III. The more extensive this diocese, the more reason there is to fear, that the evangelical spirit is becoming, by little and little, extinct. The distance of places is such, that we cannot come to a knowledge of many of the evils which are prevalent throughout it.

You, my Reverend Brethren, are that precious leaven, which God preserves, not merely to prevent the whole mass from corruption, but to sanctify it, to extend it, to encrease it, and to multiply its blessings; from you it is, that the spirit of the priesthood possesses the hearts of those, who are taking upon them its solemn engagements. If they do not imitate you, they have at least before them an example worthy of imitation; if your example does not stimulate them to fulfil their sacred duties, it does not, at least, allow them to continue ignorant of them. Shame, at a conduct so unlike yours; the education they have received,

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preparatory to their taking upon them the holy ministry, will, sooner or later, awaken them, and they will begin to follow your steps.

We consider you, then, as entrusted with the spirit of the priesthood, which is preserved in your hands, and which passes from you to those whom we ordain to the service of the altar. Continue then, my beloved Brethren, and do not grow faint in this apostolical course: remember that you are the principal columns of that grand edifice, which is committed to our care. Assist us, then, in supporting the weight of the pastoral office, under which we should faint, if you, who are our fellow-labourers, should not sustain, with us, a part of the burden. Confine not to your own flock, your zeal for God's glory; animate your brethren by your examples, and by those insinuating graces which gain the affections. Attract by the gentleness of your temper, the confidence of those Clergymen whose conduct is not correspondent to the holiness of their engagements: consider, that in gaining only one of the Lord's Ministers, you may be the instrument of salvation to a whole parish. Hearts insensible to the truth, are not, always, equally insensible to the tender affections of charity: we may irritate the evil, by condemning it without mercy, we sometimes save the patient by kindly bearing with him. I am detaining you long, because it appears to me, that such is the influence which the difference of behaviour, and of conduct, has over the minds of both the exemplary,

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and the dissipated, Pastor, as to keep them separated from each other, by an, almost, infinite distance; because it appears to me, that the only preservative for the one, is the company of the other; and that it is essential to facilitate and promote such beneficial intercourse, to the end that your examples may become diffusively useful, by directing the judgment of the careless, and regulating the morals of the dissipated.

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CHARGE VI.

ON SOLICITUDE FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?

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CHARGE VI.

ON SOLICITUDE FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

THE subject on which I shall this day expatiate, is the portion of zeal every Minister of the Gospel ought to feel for the salvation of the souls committed to his charge: and the sentiments with which his paternal bowels ought to yearn over their offences. He, who observes, without concern, the irregularities of his flock; who is content with not giving his approbation to the vices he perceives; who does not lament the loss of the souls entrusted to him:—a Pastor of this character is dead to the high sense of his calling. Zeal for the salvation of men, is, then, the first duty of a Christian Minister: this is the principle which should inspire him with resolution, and supply him with comfort, in the discharge of the most laborious duties; which should be, as it were, the soul, and the chief consolation, of his ministry.

In vain do we trust to irreproachable conduct: it is not sufficient that we lead a regular and blameless life: if, with the outward appearance of virtue, we are not penetrated with a lively sorrow, when we observe those, for whom we must one day give account, running hastily to destruction; if we do not insist upon the motives, and urge the exhorta-

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tions with which the Gospel furnishes us, to entice them from the paths of folly, and the ways of sin; if we do not, "in season, and out of season, reprove, exhort, entreat;" if, content with not doing wrong ourselves, we think our duty discharged, by tacitly disapproving, or gently, condemning, offences against God, and crimes against society, we are not Pastors of the flock; our inactive and lethargic virtue, will be an abomination in the sight of God. Let us not deceive ourselves; regularity of conduct, in a Minister of the Gospel, does not, as some seem to think, sanction indolence; because his people lose the effect of that zeal, which his example would more strongly have enforced: besides, however irreproachable his demeanor he has no more than the appearance of piety; he is, in the sight of God, "dead whilst he "liveth:" his regularity of life lulls him into a state of dangerous security; but a piercing sound, and the clamours of the souls of those, who, through his means, have perished, will, one day, awaken him from his languor, will find him with horror, and overwhelm him with dread; he quiets his mind, because he compares the regularity by which he is distinguished, with the dissipation for which some of his brethren may be notorious; but he will see, that his righteousness, was only the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

How! my brethren, could a Minister of Christ, sent to do his work upon earth, to hasten the building of the heavenly city, and the happiness of the

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Saints, observe the kingdom of Satan prevail over the empire of his Master, in that part of the people committed to his charge, and continue unmoved in his mind, and inactive in his functions? But, although vice should not be prevalent in his parish, were he a witness of it in other men, and there remained in his heart one spark of love for his Redeemer, he could not but mourn in secret; he could not but address himself to God, in anguish of spirit, that he would, in his mercy, impress all unthinking mortals with the bitterness of remorse, and a resolution of amendment: nay, ought he not to exercise the authority, with which the dignity of the Priesthood invests him, to endeavour to inspire those who have forsaken the law of the Lord, with just sentiments of Religion? And would not such a Minister betray his ministerial trust, should a criminal insensibility, or a timid prudence, suppress his feelings, and close his mouth? Could such an one believe himself innocent? But, if observing the same profligacy in his own parish, he should appear equally insensible, would his regularity of conduct dispel his apprehensions, and calm his mind? Can a shepherd see his flock falling into a pit, without running to them, and at least making them hear his voice? for, should only one stray from the fold, it is his proper business, and his incumbent duty, to traverse the mountains, and undergo the greatest hardships, that he may recover it, and bring it back.—No! Such an one is not a shepherd, he is an hireling; he is not a Minister of Jesus Christ, he usurps the

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honourable title; and, notwithstanding the idea he may entertain of his own righteousness, he is a vessel of reprobation, and of dishonour, placed in the sanctuary of God.

But many, it is objected, are so impatient of reproof, so untractable, and so rude, that a Clergyman would expose himself to the mortification of insult, and the brutality of insolence, should he attempt to reform the abuses which he discovers among them. What! my Reverend Brethren, can the enormity of the evil become an excuse and apology for indifference to it? Your parishioners are rude and untractable! It is for this very reason, that you should redouble your cares, and persist in your importunity, in order that you may soften their hearts, and reform their manners: zeal would be useless, were the exercise of it confined to moderated tempers, and gentle minds: when you perceive those, for whom you must give account, rebellious to the truth, you should allow yourselves no rest, enjoy no comfort, so long as they continue in their criminal dispositions. Because your parishioners have an higher claim upon your paternal solicitude, do you, therefore, think yourselves absolved from the exercise of it? Would you become an useless, idle labourer, because the harvest is abundant? Would the Gospel have been disseminated through the world, and the cross of Christ have triumphed over kings and people, had the apostolical men, who preceded us, been disheartened

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by the opposition and deterred by the obstacles, interposed through the pride of learning, and menaced by the arrogance of power? What would have been *our* situation, had the difficulties, insurmountable to human prudence, abated their zeal, and silenced their efforts; and if, in the persuasion of finding us untractable and savage, they had, unhappily, left us in the darkness of our original ignorance? You dread the difficulties; but what has the Minister to dread, who fulfils, with credit to himself, and edification to others, the office which he has accepted? What! contempt, calumny, perverseness? Were such the return he met with—did his people "requite him hatred for his "good will" towards them; he would not even, in such a case be without his consolations. What! Insults and provications?—Proceeding from such a cause, would they not be the most honourable seal of his apostleship? But blessed, for ever "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath called us to this holy calling;" we live in an age in which we are not only authorized by the state, but encouraged by our congregations, to explain the doctrines of the Gospel to the understanding, and to enforce the precepts of it on the heart.

Besides, those whom we represent as so uncultivated in their manners, and so ungovernable in their tempers, seldom shew themselves perverse and violent towards an edifying and zealous Minister. They revere the virtue of a man of God:

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rude as they may be, in their deportment, and gross in their conceptions, they are not without a certain degree of the fear of God: their mind is not prepossessed, nor their heart vitiated by the insinuations of scepticism, and the maxims of irreligion, both of which are, unhappily, too prevalent where luxury prevails, or dissipation abounds; they fear, and still reverence, the God whom they offend; and our exhortations are received with more submission, and productive of happier effects, in villages, than in cities and towns, where learning has puffed up some, and wealth intoxicated others.

Say not, my Reverend Brethren, that morals have undergone an entire change; that the simplicity, for which we esteemed a great part of society, has degenerated into unrestrained licentiousness; that profligacy has with such overwhelming rapidity passed from towns to villages, that we know not how to undertake to re-establish order, and a love of the ordinances of religion; that, when our parishes were less corrupt, a clergyman might hope for success from his labours; but that, at this day, almost all have corrupted their ways, and that indifference to religion, and contempt of heaven, are so visible in the conduct of men, of all ages and conditions, as greatly to discourage, and almost entirely to deter, a Minister of the Gospel from making any attempt at a general, or even an individual, reformation.—Now, allowing this to be true, the question which naturally arises is, whence

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proceeds this alarming evil? Whence originates this general source of vice among mankind? Whence is it, that villages are not, as formerly, the abode of innocence and simplicity? Let us appeal to our own hearts. Is it, or is it not, to the negligence, to the dissipation, to the want of exertion, in the Pastors, who preside over them? This is an awful question. You complain, that degeneracy of morals is prevalent throughout your parishes: but examine yourselves, and see, whether the most dreadful complaints may not be one day made by your several parishes against yourselves? And whether, at the same time, we perceive people living without religion, without the fear of God, without any limits to their profligacy, except in parishes where the priest is as negligent as the people are wicked?

Again: were it true, that you had the unhappiness to superintend a parish, which was pervaded by a public and general relaxation of morals, your soul ought to be possessed with the assurance, that the almighty hath chosen, and sent you to that sinful people, for the express purpose of reclaiming their conduct, and amending their hearts. For why are we called "the salt of the earth, and the "light of the world," but to prevent corruption, and enlighten darkness? Because our professional duties are multiplied by the encrease of sinners, are we authorised to live in the utter neglect of them? Did Moses restrain his zeal, and suppress his solicitude, when he saw the Israelites given to

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idolatry, and worshipping the golden calf which their own hands had made? The whole earth was sunk in corruption, when the first teachers of Christianity received their commission, "to go and "preach the Gospel to every creature:" Did they deliberate, whether they should go to extirpate those passions, the indulgence of which, habit had sanctioned? In that general corruption, they felt and acknowledged the divinity, and the necessity, of their mission: they considered themselves as Ministers, and instruments of salvation, sent through the mercy of God, and the love of Christ, to the whole race of men, sullied with guilt, and abandoned to profligacy. Have we not succeeded to their mission and ministry? Do we think, then, that the Almighty would destroy all the sinners to whom he sends us? that his mercy, in sending us, does not design to offer to them instruments and Ministers of salvation? And can we imagine, that he approves of our unfeeling tranquillity, in delaying our interposition, whilst he pours upon them his judgments of wrath and indignation? We should not, in such circumstances, be sent to them as their pastors, and their fathers, but as those melancholy officers of human justice towards condemned criminals, in order to witness and approve their punishment; and our ministry, far from being a ministry of life and salvation, would be no other than a dreadful ministry of condemnation and death.

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Now, if from this multitude of sinners, of whom we complain, we should bring back but one soul to Christ, would not that precious gain be a sufficient reward for the labours and troubles of a whole life? Should we not be sufficiently recompensed, by being enabled to present that happy being to the Redeemer and Judge of the world, and to hear that soul, throughout the duration of ages, acknowledging its obligations to us in the holy Jerusalem, in the presence of all the saints and angels? Why should we doubt the power of grace over the most hardened sinners? "Is God's arm shortened that it cannot save," and the riches of his mercy withdrawn from them whom he hath redeemed? You might, indeed, be discouraged at the sight of the transgressions of your people, if you had no other reliance than on your own powers: but it is not of ourselves; Christ worketh in us, and by us; the weakest instruments are those by whom he is often pleased to perform the mightiest acts: fulfil your ministry; this is all which he requires of you;—leave we the rest to him.

And, indeed, my Reverend Brethren, we talk much of the vices of mankind, as though men were too obstinate to be convinced, too stubborn to be subdued, and too rebellious to be reclaimed; as though the power of Religion itself were weak and ineffectual. To him belongeth judgment, as well as vengeance; and why should we condemn, as irretrievably lost, those whom the Lord may

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absolve from all their sins? We hope well of ourselves,—that the Almighty will one day change our lukewarmness into zeal; and we despair of salvation, and regard as incapable of happiness, a great part of society, whom ignorance, and the misfortune of a bad education, more than a want of moral principle, and of Religion, plunge into criminal excesses. Do we think, that they who lead a miserable laborious life on earth, are to endure misery, without end, after death? God forbid! It is towards these, principally, that the Almighty will not exercise the severity of his justice: to them his bowels of compassion are always open; "He shall save the poor and needy, and preserve "alive the souls of the poor."

But you will say, perhaps, that these are not the motives which have restrained you, and which have hitherto prevented the exercise of your ministry, in order to correct the errors, and reclaim the vices, which are too generally prevalent in every parish: you are afraid, you allege, of not being esteemed; of passing for a violent and imprudent Pastor, and of not producing any other fruit from your zeal, than the hatred of your parishioners.

There is, I allow, a zeal, proceeding from temper or constitution, which borders nearly on imprudence. But the zeal which proceeds from love, is mild and patient; it does not provoke, it does not enflame; it hates the sin, but it loves the sin-

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ner; it opposes patience to insensibility; it reckons not its troubles and its solicitude; it feels, indeed, the most pungent grief—not for its useless labour, but for the danger of those, whose untowardness is the sole cause of disappointment and mortification; it returns with greater fervour, and more abundant love, after having been often resisted by perverseness, and withstood by insensibility: it tries every thing, prayers, entreaties, holy indignation, in order to bring back the sheep that have strayed. No! my brethren, let us not substitute humour for zeal: let us display towards those committed to our charge, more of love than of authority; let us endeavour to persuade, rather than to subdue, them: let us not mingle the passions and the severity of the man, with the zeal and forbearance of the Minister: let us not undertake too much at once, lest we fail in every thing: let not self-love induce us to urge too importunately a work, which patience, directed by judgment, may at length, happily, accomplish: let us oppose to the obstacles we may meet with, zeal, suggested by mildness, and tempered by love.

Suffer me, in conclusion, to exhort you to cultivate in your breasts, the Christian graces of zeal, love, patience, vigilance, labour. And enforce your labours by your prayers. Speak more frequently to God, of the irregularities of the souls for whom you are to give account, than to themselves: complain more frequently to him, of the obstacles which your lukewarmness throws in the

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way of their amendment, than of those occasioned by their own obstinacy: attribute to yourselves alone, the little fruit produced by your ministry; as a tender father, excuse, in his presence the faults of your children, and bring your accusations only against yourselves; bear them continually in your heart, when you approach the throne of grace, that your sorrow and lamentations over their trespasses, may warrant the success of your cares, and promote the efficacy of your instructions; and remember that you will always labour in vain, if your prayers do not draw down upon your labours that grace, which can alone render you useful. "Pray "without ceasing. And may the God of peace "sanctify you wholly. Amen, amen!"

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CHARGE VII.

ON SOLICITUDE TO SUPPRESS VICE.

I bear them record, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

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CHARGE VII.

ON SOLICITUDE TO SUPPRESS VICE.

I HAVE, on former occasions, attempted to shew the necessity of zeal in the heart of a Minister of the Gospel; but, as zeal may not always be under the influence of judgment, I shall beg your attention, whilst I now shew how it may be made subservient to the welfare of mankind; warning you, at the same time, against whatever may have a tendency to debase its spirit, and defeat its efficacy.

Now, as zeal is no more than what is, by St. Paul, denominated, charity or love, which animates and enflames us, not only with an ardent desire for the salvation of our brethren, but, with a lively and earnest affection, to be instrumental towards it; in order to be assured that our zeal is just, in its principle, we have only to examine, whether we can apply it to some of the chief and distinguishing characters, which the apostle includes in charity. For all zeal, which doth not resemble charity, which will not be charity itself, active, compassionate, humble, mild, patient, disinterested, will not be zeal, according to knowledge,—zeal, which reflects honour on the ministry, and,

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which the Church expects, and exacts, of its Ministers.

I am aware, that zeal, like the spirit of God, from which it proceeds, assumes different forms, according to the different characters of those, whose hearts are enflamed by it. In one, it is more lively, in another, more gentle, and insinuating; in a third, more terrible and menacing. But this diversity is always seen concentred, in the fixed point of charity. These are but different ways, leading to the same end; qualities, all bearing the divine character of the principle from which they proceed. Every one has his gift, or talent, which is marked by its distinguishing characteristics. Let us, then, examine some of the principal features, which the Apostle attributes to charity; they are the same which constitute true zeal.

Zeal, originating in charity, is patient; for, charity, as the Apostle expresses it "suffereth long." Secret pride grows weary, and is disgusted, when the efficacy of its labours is not in proportion to the solicitude which suggested them; it would make grace subservient to its own glory; the moment it feels disappointment, its zeal, which this secret and foreign fire, alone, enkindled, soon begins to cool, and then becomes extinct; the work of the ministry presents nothing but what is unpleasant and uninteresting; we consider it, almost

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useless, because self-love is not better rewarded for its labours.

Sometimes, with motives, it would seem, more pure and refined, we attribute the unworthy reception of the Gospel to the obduracy of sinners; this insensibility excites dissatisfaction, and provokes impatience, rather than compassion and love: we are cold in their interest, when, from our knowledge of their moral wants, we are bound to watch over them with paternal solicitude, and, to embrace every opportunity of extirpating the love of sin, and implanting, in its stead, a love of God. The hard-heartedness of sinners, it is true, often frustrates our utmost endeavours: but we are still to feel for their miserable situation, and "to cry mightily, to God," in their behalf; a sense of their deplorable state, should awaken our affection and zeal, rather than suppress and extinguish our efforts.

The Ministers of the Church are perpetually complaining of the indocility of those who are endeared to them by the strongest ties; they complain of it, violently, to men, but not sufficiently to God. They wish their labours to be effectual, in promoting the reformation of their several flocks, because it is flattering, and because we attribute this reformation of sinners, always to ourselves: those, who deprive us of this human consolation, rob us of a glory, which we consider as our due,

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and refuse us that docility, which we might, according to our opinion, justly expect from them: we, therefore, soon hold them in contempt; we leave them to their own insensibility; and appear as little affected with their miserable situation, as they are with our ineffectual endeavours.

But the zeal of charity, says the Apostle, "reproves, rebukes, exhorts;" its affection encreases with the progress of the complaint, and to new obstacles, opposes the patience, which produces hope; that is to say, it gives the Christian Pastor more abundant concern, and supplies him with new models of instruction. Actuated by this evangelical zeal, he continually supplicates the Throne of Grace, that he may be an humble instrument in the hands of the Most High, in turning many to righteousness: the longer God, in his wisdom, delays to hear his petitions, and to grant his requests, the more he labours to render him propitious, by redoubling his efforts, and pouring out his sorrows; the impotence of his ministry he attributes to his want of faith, and to human weakness, which, unhappily, mingle with his sacred obligations. Those Pastors, who sow, but receive no encrease, should all be directed by the same spirit which guided the Apostle—"Master, "we have toiled," said Peter, "all the night, and "have taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word, "I will let down the net." Hitherto, O Lord, all my cares, towards the people thou hast committed to my charge, have produced nothing. I do not

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cease to cast the net, and it returns to me empty: —neither have I the consolation of drawing one soul from the depth of the waters, and the abyss of iniquity. Notwithstanding, thou commandest me to labour still, and not to be weary; thou wouldest, that I should imitate thy patience, and thy fatherly goodness, which often knock at the door of a rebellious heart, and which, though many times repulsed with rudeness, and rejected with disdain, after once gaining admission, eagerly enter in. Following thy blessed steps, I will not abandon the pious work: Thou commandest, and thy commands ensure success; Thou wilt grant it, when it pleaseth thee; and my impatience, far from hastening, retards it; thou wouldest that all men should know, that he who planteth, and that he who watereth, are alike, nothing, and that the fruit of righteousness, in the heart, and in the life, is the work of thy mercy, and the effect of thy power.

From patience proceeds kindness;—"Charity," says the Apostle, "is kind."

But, when St. Paul includes kindness, among the characters of genuine zeal, he does not mean that softness, that pusillanimity, that courtesy, which disposes us to suppress those arguments which would first fill the sinner with terror, and might, afterwards, lead him to repentance; insomuch, that instead of prevailing with him to forsake his evil courses, we confirm him in them,

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and furnish him with means to suppress the alarms, or elude the remonstrances, of conscience.

Zeal, which results from charity, assumes different forms, according to the several wants of our flock. But it is always the kindness of charity which suggests the expressions, whether of comfort, or of terror. The harshness, the severity of censure, honoured with the name of zeal, it totally disavows. Zeal, which would blaze abroad the depravity it cannot correct, is not that which originates in charity. The Pastor, who is possessed of this, makes the irregularities of his brethren the subject of his lamentations, and not of his public animadversions: he does not expatiate upon their faults to men, but, by a tender application to themselves, strives to reclaim their hearts, that they may obtain the favour of God.

Sometimes, indeed, under the pretence of zeal, the Ministers of the Gospel discover towards their people the utmost violence—pointing at them, as it were with their finger, in their public discourses: describing them, by characters, so personal, and striking, that no one, in the congregation, can fail of perceiving the unjustifiable, and unworthy design of the Preacher*.

* I am unwilling to believe, that a Clergyman of the Church of England, can prostitute the pulpit to so diabolical a purpose.

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A Christian Minister cannot be too much on his guard, cannot too frequently, nor too seriously, exercise his judgment, on this important subject. For, if his zeal be not according to knowledge, his ministry is not merely useless, but odious, to his flock: to the dislike which sinners have of virtue, he adds the hatred of him who preaches it.

Zeal, which results from charity, is respected, and beloved, by those, whose irregularities it reproves, and whose profligacy it condemns. If it does not render vice odious, it, at least, takes care not to subject the ministry to contempt; if it does not withdraw men from the paths of folly, it, at least succeeds in gaining their esteem for virtue. Zeal which is according to knowledge, may be compared to the behaviour of an affectionate mother to her children, who, by every effort which ingenuity can suggest, and every toil, which patience can endure, strives to implant in them a principle of rectitude, and a love of virtue: if her maternal intentions are disappointed, her tears, and her sorrows, are the only resentment she betrays, at their ingratitude: the farther they deviate from the paths of wisdom and prudence, the more her love for them seems to encrease; the nearer she sees them on the point of perishing, the more her tenderness is enlarged, and her affection awakened: zeal is never excited by ill temper and chagrin; it is love, alone, which dictates its admonition, and urges its rebukes.

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In the third place, this zeal, arising from charity, not only extinguishes in our hearts every degree of impatience, but moreover, affords us satisfaction and pleasure, as often as we perceive the ministerial labours of our brethren accompanied with more, and greater, blessings, than our own —"Charity envieth not."

This mean jealousy is so repugnant to the spirit of that zeal which proceeds from charity—they are so opposite in their principles—that they cannot subsist together. The former is a meanness of soul, which grieves, even at the repentance of sinners, at the progress of the gospel, at the glory of God, and the power of his grace, when, by the ministry of another person, the Almighty calls the thoughtless, and the profligate from the evil of their ways: when under the influence of this detestable passion, we do not propose, to ourselves, the salvation of our brethren—No! only the idle vanity of becoming, in our own persons, the instruments, and the ministers of it. We are no further interested in promoting the glory of God, than as we can attach our own to it: we could even bear to see our brethren perish, rather than that they should be saved by other cares, and other talents, than our own. Provided that the Gospel was preached, the Apostle rejoiced, although it should be by the ministry of those, who misinterpreted his views, and misrepresented his character, to the Christian Church; whereas, we would stand alone, and suffer no one to participate with

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us, in proclaiming the truth, and impressing the influence, of the Gospel, on the hearts of men: whatever good is done by others, is insupportable to us, and we consider the gifts which God is pleased to confer upon our brethren, as subjects of our confusion and disgrace. Alas! that the duties of the ministry, which should surely re-unite all ordained to the same office, should divide them: we look upon the labourers employed in the same vineyard with ourselves, with an eye of jealousy; we depreciate, we mutually disparage, the talents of each other; we are eager to attract, and to confine, to ourselves, general applause: and we think, that we have promoted God's glory, by withholding it from those, to whom, without our artful interposition, it would have been given; as if public applause, rather than the secret effusions of grace, would constitute us diligent workmen, and faithful stewards, in the eyes of God. But we do not stop here; we arraign the principle by which other men are actuated: and a ministry of peace becomes a cause of war, and of dissention; we disseminate the same spirit of division among our hearers:—the jealousy of the Ministers possesses the minds of their people; some are of Cephas, and others of Paul; it is well, if one among them be of Jesus Christ. What a subject of affliction to the Church, and of triumph to its enemies!

Believe me, my Brethren, true zeal perceives, with holy transports, the work of the Gospel, pro-

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gressively going on, conquering, and to conquer, in the hand of all its Ministers, employed by the Church; if the Gospel be preached, its desires are satisfied. Possessed of this zeal, we are even persuaded, that the talents of those, who are ordained to the same holy calling, are better calculated to be serviceable to the Church, than our own, because we would willingly believe, that they are not sullied by the same weaknesses. Our hearts are only filled with sorrow, to see the harvest abundant, and so few labourers, either not capable of the employ, or not hearty in the cause: we demonstrate, by our whole conduct, that nothing is greater, and more worthy of Religion, than zeal, sustained by charity; and, on the other hand, that nothing is so mean, so contemptible, so disgraceful, to the sacred ministry, as that zeal, which betrays itself, in vexatious jealousies, and foolish envyings.

But it would signify little, to preserve our zeal, from the poison of jealousy, if we were not, at the same time, upon our guard, to avoid temerity, and imprudence. For "Charity doth not behave itself unseemly."

Fourthly. Zeal is a holy desire of becoming useful to mankind; but a desire, directed by judgment, and tempered by prudence, which suggests to us, the choice of means. Whatever presents itself as good, is not always, on that account, proper; that which may be lawful, is not always ex-

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pedient. If you see that your zeal will rather irritate, than persuade, take care, lest you expose yourself to contempt, and the Gospel to derision; lest you rather gratify your own impatience, than relieve your brother's infirmities.

The Apostle, it is true, enjoins, that we be "instant, in season, and out of season;" by which he means, that the negligence with which our solicitude is received, is not to silence our exertions, and deaden our sensibility: in other words, when profligacy is gaining ground, we are to exert our utmost efforts to suppress it: call this, if you please, excess; but it is an excess which charity prescribes, and religion sanctions, which the command of Heaven exacts of us, and the consoling, and unhoped-for success, with which it is, sometimes accompanied, always justifies. This is what the Apostle means, by being "instant, in season, and out of season:" but he would not, thereby, signify to us, that the pretended sanctity of our motives would excuse the irregularity, and the rashness, of our proceedings.

We, frequently, see Ministers, whom an ungovernable zeal, sometimes, involves in the greatest perplexities. They undertake every thing; whatever promises them any good, animates, and puts them in motion; nothing seems to them impossible; and nothing appears to be in its right place; they would change, they would remove, every thing: they begin, by throwing into confusion

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whatever they touch, under the pretence of re-establishing order. Bold, restless spirits, who, if they can exercise their turbulent zeal, are satisfied with themselves, and think "they have fulfilled all righteousness." These, notwithstanding are laborers, good in their intention, indefatigable in their calling, irreprehensible in their morals, and who are led into these extravagances, by the very excess of their piety. It is lamentable, that among the small number of Ministers the Church esteems capable of serving her, by their appropriate talents, and exemplary life, any should be found, whom indiscretion and temerity render, not only useless in their station, but injurious to their cause.

But jealousy and rashness are the ordinary consequences of pride, and of zeal without knowledge: in order, therefore, to banish more effectually these two vices, from their attendance upon this pastoral virtue, the Apostle adds, that it is necessary to suppress pride—"Charity," he says, ". is not puffed up."

Fifthly. Zeal, indeed, is not puffed up, either with its talents, or the success of them, nor with the want of talents, and of success in others; neither with the vain praises, nor severe censures, of men, neither with the favor, nor with the contempt of the great: in a word, the poisonous breath of pride, finds all the avenues of the heart closed by charity, and is there refused any abode, to taint the gifts of God. Zeal, that zeal, at least, which I am describ-

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ing, whose principle is love, attributes nothing to itself; its first impression is, to annihilate within us every high thought of ourselves; to efface all idea of the man, and to substitute God alone, in his place.

Still, how seldom is it that man is not dazzled with empty applause! "Rejoice not," said our Lord, to his disciples, "because the spirits are "subject unto you, but rather rejoice, because "your names are written in heaven." It is, alas! but too true, that we applaud ourselves, when our exhortations, whether public or personal, produce any apparent good—an effect which is to be attributed entirely to God—whilst we look with indifference on the infirmities which debase, and the passions which defile, our own character; and, after having striven with unremitted assiduity, to prevail with your flocks, to make their peace with God, that their names may be written in the book of life, we ourselves may be called into another scene of existence, before we are become the objects of God's mercy. What instances, even of the most successful labour, can be compared to that which attended the ministry of the great Apostle? Cities and provinces were brought, by his unwearied exertions to the knowledge of the truth? Notwithstanding he was apprehensive that, after labouring to instruct and confirm mankind, in the faith of the Gospel, he himself might be rejected—"Lest," he says, "after having preached "to others, I, myself, should become a cast-away." To himself he arrogated nothing: but he feared,

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lest the gifts of God should make him forget the weaknesses of the man.

The zeal, then, which we are describing, is persuaded, that God refuses to other men these external gifts, only, that he may enrich them more abundantly with the inward and inestimable blessings of his love, and of his grace: far from exalting us above them, by secret comparisons, it disposes us to contemplate, with complacency, their more perfect state of holiness and righteousness, whilst it considers itself as a channel often dry, after having refreshed the adjoining soil with its waters. Great talents do not necessarily imply the greatest virtues in their possessors: they render us more useful to men, but we do not always become thereby the most acceptable to God. "He who giveth "to every man severally, as he will," hath, with such infinite wisdom, dispensed his blessings, that not always those to whom he seems to have allotted the largest portion, do most abound in the graces of his spirit; on the other hand, those to whom he refuses the most shining talents, he recompences by an abundance of grace, known to himself alone, and often infinitely more deserving of admiration, than that external shew, which attracts the applause of men, and which, by these very means, leaves us, not infrequently, devoid of grace, and full of ourselves, before God.

The last character of zeal I shall mention, is, that "it thinketh no evil."

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Sixthly. It is a fault, peculiar to men actuated by an intemperate zeal, to consider some sinners, who seem insensible to their instructions, negligent of their advice, and deaf to their remonstrances, as in a state of inevitable perdition; and the more solicitous they are for the salvation of those unhappy people, the less hope they entertain of promoting it. They imagine, that they see God's seal of reprobation engraven on the hearts of those infatuated men: the warmth of their language confirms the temerity of their thoughts; they loudly lament over them, as men already judged; and, as though they were acquainted before hand with the counsels of Heaven, or the Lord's mercies were not more abundant, than their uncharitableness; they look upon those as lost, whom God is, it may be, about to receive into his favour, and bless with his protection. To entertain such sentiments is an outrage, committed against the power of his grace; it is to regard the atonement, made by the blood of his Son, as ineffectual; it is to make the time of this life, which is the period of repentance and mercy, a season of his wrath and vengeance. The children of the kingdom may be cast out; and God may, of very stones,—of hearts, the most hard and insensible,—raise up children unto Abraham. The conversion of Satan alone, and of his angels, are the only things we are forbidden to hope for; but as to our brethren, who live still among us, and for whom Christ died, however sinful, and however wicked—the blood of the true Abel may cry for them towards heaven,

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and supplicate, not their punishment, but their salvation and their deliverance.

And you, who judge your brother before God has passed sentence upon him, how know you, whether, strong as you may appear in the power of the Lord, you may not fall upon your own stedfastness, never to rise again; and whether your brother, whom you consider as fallen, everlastingly, from the favour of God, may not rise, to fall no more? Who hath revealed to you the unfathomable depths of the mercy and justice of God, towards men! "Judge nothing," says the Apostle, "before the time:"—May we all work out our own salvation, with fear, and labour to promote that of others, with diligence!

Let us never forget, my Brethren, that the zeal of charity, "like charity itself, suffereth long, and "is kind; that it envieth not; that it vaunteth "not itself; is not puffed up; is not easily pro-"voked; thinketh no evil." Let us banish all odious characters from our zeal; let us humble our own spirit; and may the spirit of God, alone, work and act in us! Zeal hath vanquished the world, in the mouths of the first Preachers of the Gospel; it will again in ours, if the Spirit of God inspire us with what we shall think, and what we shall speak. The world shewed a greater repugnance to the truth, when first proclaimed by the Gospel: the severity of laws, the rage of superstition, the wisdom of philosophy, all, with

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their united force, opposed to it, and all acknowledged its irresistible power; and it would, again, be honoured with the same triumphs, were it entrusted with the same Ministers. Let us enter into the spirit of our holy predecessors, and we shall enter into the success of their labours: let us imitate the same zeal, and we shall gather the same fruit from it: the world is not more vicious; —No! the ministers of the Gospel are less holy, and less diligent. Let us render ourselves worthy of being the preachers of the truth, and we shall once more be enabled to deliver the world, by the power of its evidence, and the efficacy of its persuasion.

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CHARGE VIII.

ON A GOOD EXAMPLE.

Be thou an example of the believers.

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CHARGE VIII.

ON A GOOD EXAMPLE.

THE character by which the Clergy ought to be distinguished from other men, is not a spirit of dominion, but a principle of love. "We are not "to be lords over God's heritage, but examples of "the flock, entrusted to our care." It is chiefly in becoming "an example, in word, in conversa- "tion, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," that we support the high title we have the honour to bear. Christ himself, the great "Shepherd, "and Bishop of our souls, left not the glory which "he had, with the Father, before the world was," in order to receive honour from men. No! he was to become our example; an example of labour, of sorrow, of meekness, of charity, of suffering. "I have given you," says he, to his disciples, "an example." He has left us, in his place, for the very purpose of becoming, as is expressed by the Apostle, "an example of the believers;" that we should do to others, as he hath done to us.

Example is, then, the ground-work of a Clergyman's character; without which, all the duties of our station, however engaging, and eloquent, we

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may be, in the performance of some, and attentive, and punctual, in the discharge of all, only create disgust and dissatisfaction.

The pastoral office is, in a great measure, useless: it is not that the efficacy of the Sacraments depends on the virtues of the Minister. The inestimable blessings of God to his Church would be unstable and uncertain, could our weaknesses, either annihiliate their efficacy, or suspend their course.

But the piety, the instructions, the prayers of a faithful Pastor, prepare his hearers to receive the blessings of the Gospel, in such a way, as to gain access to their hearts, and thereby, to render them "a people prepared for the Lord;" whereas, a Clergyman, who does not edify the souls, committed to his care, dispenses, indeed, the same treasures, and the same graces; but they fall upon an unprepared soil, upon hearts which his example hath not only indisposed to receive them, but hath also rendered inaccessible to all the influences of grace: "he strews, but he doth not gather;" his Church is a dry, and barren field, which produces only thorns: his congregation approach the holy Table with the same irreverence as they discover in their Pastor, and his instructions both find, and leave, his auditors so prejudiced against his conduct, as to derive no advantage from them. If he is called to visit the sick, or attend the dying, his presence rather exhibits to them this world, than eternity; the love

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of the present life, much more than the expectation, and the desire, of that which is to come. What a misfortune to a people whom God hath entrusted to such a Minister! a misfortune, still greater, if that people feel the common calamities with which Providence may have sometimes afflicted them, and are not alive to the greatest and most severe scourge with which he can afflict them; which is, to leave them to be conducted by an unfaithful guide.

And what is still more deplorable, as a Pastor of this character seldom delights in study, and cannot delight in prayer, he must, necessarily, pass his time in company; and the more he lives in society, the less useful he is. For what benefit can mankind receive from his conversation? What do they see, in seeing him? Nothing which can lead them to cultivate the love of God, and inspire a love of piety;—nothing which eradicates the passions and prejudices, indulged by those who are not under the influence of religion.

On the other hand, we perceive the inestimable advantage, which a parish derives from the example and conversation of a respectable and godly Minister. Wherever he is, his life, his morals, are a continual lesson of instruction. Abundant is the good we may do, by being faithful to our trust; and dreadful will be the account the Sovereign Pastor will demand of us, should our conduct have been an obstacle to the innumerable blessings await-

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ing a proper discharge of our duty, and which might have actually been acquired, had an exemplary Pastor filled our place. Let us often dwell on this awful and humiliating reflection:—Had a worthy Clergyman been at the head of the flock over which I preside, and in the midst of whom my ministry has produced no change for the better,—what sins might he not have prevented?—what inveterate wounds might he not have healed?—what a renewal of piety throughout his parish?—what a number of souls might he have reclaimed, from the error of their ways?—how many, ready to fall, might he not have preserved?—how many might he have rescued from the prince of darkness, and have presented them, washed from all their sins, in the blood of the Lamb, at the throne of God?

But with what consternation will an useless Pastor then appear, whose example, far from having edified those for whom Christ died, tended to corrupt their ways, to darken their understandings, and to harden their hearts? How will he appear, in the presence of an assembled world, before the Supreme Judge, invested with an holy character, which will only encrease his condemnation? The souls with which he will be surrounded, will be those, who, having been committed to his care, were confirmed in error, by his example; souls, who will represent to their Judge, that had he in his mercy, sent them a priest "after his own heart," a Pastor, who would have been their guide, and

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their model, they "like Tyre and Sidon, would "have repented in sackcloth and ashes."

Prodigious, then, is the evil, when the Pastor doth not edify his flock, by his example, as he, thereby, destroys the efficacy of his ministerial office, prodigious is the evil, when, combating, by his morals, the truths which he preaches, he thereby weakens the force, and prevents the application, of them, to the circumstances of his hearers; since the preaching of the Gospel, the principal means appointed by God, for the salvation of the righteous, and the conversion of the wicked, is, in his mouth, inefficacious to those to whom it is delivered.

But this is only the beginning of evil; as the example of such a Pastor, becomes, in the language of the prophet, "a snare of a fowler, in all his "ways, and hatred in the house of his God." Not only is he an unprofitable labourer in the Lord's vineyard, but he destroys, he lays it waste, he makes it an habitation of devils. What impression must the life of an unholy Pastor, which they have continually before their eyes, be expected to make on an illiterate and simple people? Can you suppose, that a parish, composed of such a description of men, can be actuated by a vital principle of Religion; when the very man, to whose protection are committed the interests of virtue, and the support of piety, becomes, by his example, an instrument of seduction, and a pattern of vice? Ignorance and corruption, even

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under circumstances the most favourable to Religion and morality, extenuate, in their minds, their disorderly life; and a faithful Pastor every day sees his solicitude, his instructions, his example, all insufficient to remove the veil from such unhappy prejudices; what, then, can be the remedy, when a worthless Minister confirms them, by his conduct. Men expect from him, temperance, charity, and piety: they consider him, from his office, incapable of beholding the vices opposed to these virtues: what an agreeable surprize, then, to see him, not only quietly observe, but publicly approve, by the sanction of his morals, those irregularities! what vestiges of Religion and piety, can there remain, among the souls entrusted to his care! They are all persuaded that they may, without danger, follow a guide, who knows so much more than themselves, and who is so much better instructed in what Religion allows, and what it forbids; all remorse of conscience subsides, and yields to this delusion. This profligate Pastor becomes a living, and constant, apology, for vice; and if the corruption of nature is such, that a faithful and good Minister, combating it perpetually, in the midst of his people, is not able to arrest its course, what an inundation of depravity will not be let loose, throughout a parish, by the example of one, neither restrained by moral principle, nor professional decorum?

If our parishoners often misinterpret our most innocent actions; if, as the Apostle directs, we

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often see it expedient, that we may not give offence, to abstain from things the most indifferent in their nature, and forbidden by no law, divine or human; how will they be astonished, with what indignation will they not be moved, by the drunkenness and intemperance, by the sordid avarice, or notorious profligacy, of a Minister of the gospel? If ignorant misrepresentation, if unfounded suspicions, defeat the efficacy of our public instructions, what good can be produced by the holy word, in the mouth of a profligate teacher? It appears contemptible; it loses, not only its power, but its truth is called in question. Religion, in all its parts, is considered only of human invention, instituted as a source of profit, and a fountain of honor, for those, who are no further observant of its precepts, than it is congenial to their inclination, and conducive to their interest.

These blasphemies fill you with horror; but we are they who occasion them, when the purity of our morals does not correspond to that of our character. Through us it is, that "the name of God is blas-"phemed." The most hardened sinners pretend to no other safety, in that deplorable state, and offer no other apology for their vices, than the example of a worthless Minister. Many, perhaps, of the unhappy souls who have gone before us, and who, in their place of torment, are separated from God, to all eternity, owe their misery to the pernicious examples of the clergy, among whom they have lived: some, perhaps, I speak it weeping, may go

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into that region of horror, misled by our licentious principles, and corrupted by our scandalous immoralities.

So peculiar is the situation of a Minister of the gospel, that if his character doth not promote the interests of religion, it is injurious to them; if he does not recommend piety, by his whole deportment, he introduces, he authorises, he encourages, vice. The ministry, notwithstanding, which commits to us the care of souls, seems, not to be generally considered as an awful and solemn engagement; men wish for it, they solicit it, they are happy when they have obtained it, and they have, sometimes, recourse to means, in order to obtain it, which propriety cannot countenance, and religion must condemn. "He that is not called, and that entereth "not by the door, into the sheep-fold, but climbeth "up some other way, the same is a thief and a rob-"ber." Now one certain sign of our being called to the ministry, is an holy dread of sinking under the weight which it imposes. Alas! we consider it merely as abounding with temporal advantages, and we are eager in our pursuit of them, not that we may possess the opportunity of being the instrument of salvation to men, but that we may obtain riches, and enjoy ease: we do not trouble ourselves with the eagagements we enter into, and the obligations we contract, towards the souls the Church hath committed to our care; whereas, if only one perish, he who redeemed them, will require of us a severe account, and it will be incumbent on us to shew, that the unhappy wretch was neither influenced by our so-

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licitude, nor instructions, neither by our example, nor our prayers, or that he otherwise would not have perished: we hold the place of Jesus Christ, in the midst of this flock: and can we say to him, as he said to his Father—"of all those committed "to my care I have not lost one."

Suffer me, in conclusion, to address to you the words of the Apostle—Seeing, my Reverend Brethren, things are so, and seeing that your examples are to be one great criterion whereby to judge, not only of the state of your own souls, but also of the salvation of the souls committed to your charge, be steadfast and immoveable; you, especially, who discharge, with credit to yourselves, and edification to your respective flocks, the several duties of your ministry;—let not the examples of negligence, and of conduct, little correspondent to the sacred profession, of some of your brethren, occasion in you the smallest abatement of zeal, in the faithful and diligent performance of those engagements, which may promote the salvation, or involve the ruin, of the redeemed of the Lord: let not the abuses, authorized by too many, ever prevail over you, in opposition to the precepts which condemn them: let not the indolence, the inattention, the attachment, to the perishable things of this life, which seem to pervade not a small part of the ministry, cause you to forget the holiness of your calling, but rather fix, immoveable, your minds upon it. Far from looking around you, where you sometimes see, in your brethren, sub-

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jects of grief and lamentation, place, always, before your eyes, the Ministers who first preached the Gospel of Christ; those ancient and venerable examples, to whose zeal, diligence, and virtue, we dare not hope to attain. Never consider your ministry, at any period of it, as a situation of honorable repose: think not of appropriating any time to yourself, if you can by a different application of it, preserve only one soul from perdition: content not yourselves with going through your public and ordinary duties, after which, we are ready to persude ourselves, that we are discharged from every other: so long as you shall see among your flock, abuses to correct, sinners to reclaim, or weak Christians to support, consider not your obligations fulfilled: let zeal and charity inspire you with a solicitude, which the letter of the Canons of the Church doth not seem to impose, but which the spirit of them rigorously exacts: measure your pastoral exertions, not by stipulated rules, or by the decay of your constitution, but by the wants of your parishioners. Let not age itself, let not the long, and active, discharge of your ministerial avocations, in which you may have grown old, suggest to you a legitimate reason for ceasing from the combat, and of, at length, enjoying the repose, to which, after so many years of labour, in reclaiming men from vice, and encouraging them in virtue, you may seem to be entitled: rather let your youth be renewed, like the eagle; zeal may supply powers which nature may, in appearance, refuse; these precious remains of decay, are honora-

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ble to the ministry: be the Eleazar of the new covenant; and let not old age become a motive to any indulgences, which may not be strictly consistent, at the close of a life, dedicated to the discharge of the pastoral obligations. Continue to abound in the work of the Lord.

The nearer you approach to the close of your ministerial labours, the more ought your zeal to be invigorated. How lamentable will it be, if, at that period, you are wanting in courage and resolution; and if, by a premature repose, you forfeit the reward of an entire life of exemplary diligence, passed in the blessed employment of rescuing souls from Satan, and of presenting them acceptable unto God!

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CHARGE IX.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE MINISTRY.

Thou that makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident, that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

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CHARGE IX.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE MINISTRY.

YOU expect from me, no doubt, my Brethren, some word of instruction and consolation: I will, however, satisfy myself with beseeching you to meditate frequently on the following awful passage of the Apostle. To the faithful Pastors, it will administer comfort; to the careless and negligent, it will be a source of confusion.

"Thou that maketh thy boast of God, and "knowest his will, and approvest the things that "are more excellent, being instructed out of the "law; and art confident, that thou thyself art a "guide of the blind, a light of them which are in "darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher "of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and "of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which "teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

"Thou that makest thy boast of God."—We, then, whose highest honour it is to be the Ministers of God; we, who owe to Religion the distinction which society has conferred upon us, let us not weaken, by our morals, the reverence due to our holy office; let us not accustom the world to separate our private conduct from our professional character. Let us honour, in our persons, the priest-

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hood, if we desire that it should reflect honour upon us: we are, it is true, to be "clothed" with respect—but piety, alone, can render us respectable; and so long as men shall not perceive it to be the predominating principle in our behaviour, their contempt will encrease, in proportion to the reverence which they conceived to be attached to our profession: and what ought to attract their regard and esteem, will serve only to heighten our shame, and aggravate our reproach. The world neither does, nor can, know any thing more contemptible, than an unprincipled Pastor.

"And knowest his will, and approvest the things "that are more excellent, being instructed out "of the law."—We, who have, from our infancy, been nurtured by the sacred truths of the Gospel —we, who have, from our earliest years, been blessed with a religious education—how shall we answer to God, if our morals have not been correspondent to our information; if, with more knowledge than the people we are to direct, we are, perhaps, less religious, less charitable, less disinterested, less temperate than themselves? A single truth, proposed to an ingenuous man, often opens his eyes, informs his understanding, and affects his heart; and shall we, who declare these truths, continue in our lethargy, and our want of sensibility? Our blindness seems to encrease, in the midst of encreasing light that surrounds us; and whilst we are bearing the torch, which shews the path, we wander from it ourselves, and perish in the very act of saving others.

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" And approvest the things that are more excel-
" lent, being instructed out of the law."—We, who know the height to which we are to aspire, and the advances we are expected to make, under the blessings of the gospel, the vices we are to renounce, and the virtues we are to practise, we are more attached to the earth, to sordid interests, more the slaves of sense; we live less by faith, than those ignorant men, who scarce distinguish good from evil; but in whom a love of religion, and a fear of God, supply the absence of knowledge, and the defect of instruction. Ignorance, indeed, oftens lead them to superstition; but this very superstition is no other than an excess of religion: their simplicity will plead before God, in excuse for their weakness: they carry religion too far, because their minds are not sufficiently enlightened with knowledge; whereas we, although instructed in the word and doctrine, discharge imperfectly our several duties; enforced as they are, upon our consciences, by the conviction, that God will demand them of us, in proportion to the light we have, and the opportunities we possess.

" And art confident, that thou thyself art a guide
" of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness."—That is to say, what encreases our confidence, ought to become the continual motive of our most reasonable apprehensions. We are the light of the blind—but do we guide, do we enlighten them? Does it appear, in the conduct of the people committed to our care, that they have a leader and

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a guide? Are they not as sheep without a shepherd? Do we instruct them? Do our examples support our instructions? Are we not blind leaders of the blind? And will not both fall into the same ditch, either by the carelesness with which our instructions are impressed on them, or by the degeneracy which we exhibit to them? We are the light of them that walk in darkness; but prayer and study are the means which render us the light of men: prayer is the science of the heart; study that of the mind; the one derives its utility from the other. Now, how associate the habit, and the consequent delight, of prayer, with the dissipated life which many lead? Our preparatory years are devoted to study; the priesthood obtained, books disappear, and study is neglected: the moment that some men are ordained to the pastoral office, which supposes them capable of instructing mankind, they cease to acquire knowledge; and often, when they are so situated, as to have no occasion to exercise it, they forget what they had previously acquired.

"An instructor of the foolish."—The Sacred Writings style those men fools, who "set their affec-"tions on things of the earth, and not on things "above." It is, then, peculiarly incumbent on us to teach men, that the fear of God is the only true wisdom, that every thing besides, is "vanity and "vexation of spirit;" that, to devote reason, prudence, judgment, diligence, understanding, merely to obtain the perishable things of this life, and to build here, upon the sand, an abiding city,

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without thinking of that which is prepared for us in heaven, is no other than the prudence of fools, and the grossest of follies. Notwithstanding, far from undeceiving them, our solicitude, our anxiety to lay up treasures, our views confined solely to the earth, our low and sordid avarice—do they not confirm mankind in this deplorable error? The avarice of the Clergy has become so common, that it has almost passed into a proverb: it is a reproach, however undeservedly, cast upon the whole order*.

"A teacher of babes." The innocence of children is entrusted to us; their faith and their Religion, as an holy treasure, which God hath committed to our care: they derive from us the title which makes them Christians†; it is our duty then to teach them to what this high title engages them; to cultivate those young plants, which we ourselves

* This reflection cannot be applied to the Clergy of the Church of England, who are, very many of them, the most humane and charitable of men.

† "Besides our general Instructions, it is very needful, that we give the Youth under our Care, in particular, an early Knowledge of our Religion, that may abide with them; and stand the Trials to which their riper Years will of course be exposed. I hope you are diligent in that most useful work of Catechizing: and have done your utmost to prepare for Confirmation, those whom you present to me. And I earnestly recommend it to you, that the good Impressions, which may well be supposed to be made upon their Minds at this Season, be not suffered to wear off again; but be improved into settled Habits of Religion and Virtue, by still farther Exhortations, and leading them as soon as possible to the Holy Communion." —Abp. SECKER.

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have planted in the Lord's vineyard. You have given them a Christian birth-right, by baptism; but immediately forsaking them, they become like those children who are, by the inhumanity of their parents, exposed, and live, and die, alas! ignorant of their titles, of their origin, that "they are heirs "of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" the profligacy of their life is generally correspondent to their neglected situation. Can you have them continually under your eyes, and not reproach your insensibility towards those innocent victims, who have, it should seem, received at your hands the sacrament of regeneration, merely for the purpose of depriving them, as far as in your power, of its efficacy, and of stifling them, if I may be allowed the expression, in the cradle, by not supporting them with the milk of the doctrine of the Gospel? You are shocked at the barbarity of a mother, who, after having given life to a child, exposes and abandons it; but is not this a natural image of the hard-heartedness of a Pastor, who, after having given the life of faith to his children, exposes, abandons them, and delivers them to a total ignorance of the faith they have received, infinitely more pernicious, than the evils of hunger, and the calamities of indigence. They will, it is true, carry into the presence of God, the high and unavailing title of Christianity; but it will be a title of condemnation to you, rather than to them; it will rise up in judgment against you: you will have made Christians, without Religion, and without a knowledge of its Blessed Author: how then

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shall you ever be able to repair, as far as they are concerned, the fault you have committed against them? How shall you be able to raise an edifice, when you have laid no other foundation, than in dreadful ruins?

But what is the most lamentable is, that you involve your successors in the same shame; you leave, after your departure, a curse in the midst of you parishes, to which the zeal of the most faithful Ministers can scarce apply a remedy. For what advantage can be derived from the ministry of the most vigilant Pastor, after your decease in a parish in which he will find no knowledge of Religion;* where he must have recourse to the first instructions of childhood, in order to inform the minds of them that arrived at years of maturity? Shame alone, at becoming children, will always impose an invincible obstacle to the soli-

* It is not improbable, that the extreme ignorance of Christianity, which generally pervades our parishes, arises from the little instructions given to children in their early days. How greatly is it to be wished that, not only in Lent, but at other seasons of the year, the children in every parish were taught the Church Catechism; and that familiar lectures were given upon the several parts of it! The observation of Massillon, is strikingly just—that little good can be done by the most zealous Minister, through the negligence of his predecessors, in not having taught the children the elements of christianity. May I presume, without offence, to recommend it to the Clergy, individually, to give, where it is practicable, to every family in their several parishes, that most useful of all tracts, the Church Catechism, broke into short questions?

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citude of the most diligent Pastor, who must, as the Apostle observes, "feed them with milk," instead of a more solid nourishment: they will die in ignorance of Jesus Christ, who has redeemed them; of the church, which has regenerated them; of the Holy Spirit who has sanctified them; and from the bosom of christianity, and from the midst of the light of the Gospel, will proceed many souls, like those who shall come from unbelieving countries, and who shall appear before God in all the darkness and ignorance of paganism and idolatry.

Remember then, my brethren, that children are the purest part of your flock, and consequently, that which you ought to esteem most, and which has the highest claim on your affections; the instruction of children is the most consolatory, and the most honorable, part of our ministry. Let us, in those young and innocent souls, shew respect to that precious treasure of the grace attendant upon baptism, which they still preserve, and which we all have lost. Let us look upon them as holy temples, where the glory and majesty of God reside, which the breath of Satan hath not yet sullied; let us enter into these views of faith; and the diligence which their tender age demands from us, far from appearing low and contemptible, will appear worthy of the whole sublimity of our ministry. I will not carry this reflection farther: my design, in what I have already said, is rather to stimulate your fidelity, than reproach your negligence.

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Hear the conclusion of the Apostle, it concerns us all; and let us never lose sight of truths which so nearly affect us.

" Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not " thyself ?"—You, then, whose duty it is to instruct others, and to shew them the way of salvation, begin, by first shewing it to, and then walking in it, yourself. What fruit can you hope from your instructions, if you, every day, contradict them by your examples ? Your morals are, in the estimation of your hearers, more powerful and persuasive, than your discourses; they cry continually, to them that hear you—disregard what we say, observe only what we do.

" That the Name of God be not blasphemed." —Here it is that the Apostle finishes this instruction. Yes, my Brethren, we are compelled to ask the question—If faith be almost extinct among Christians; if, at this day, there are many licentious spirits, who treat with an air of derision and of plasphemy, what we hold sacred : if there are many who consider Religion as a matter of indifference ; is it not the little piety, charity, regularity, which they observe in our conduct—is it not the idle and worldly life of the Clergy, which has led them to such unwarrantable lengths :—Has not " desolation begun in the holy place?"

It is our example alone, which effaces from the hearts of Christians, what still remains of the fear

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of God: the effects of our passions are brought forward, in order to justify the same in themselves: our example calms their remorse, and leads them to place in morals, resembling ours, a security which their consciences would have refused them: they think, there can be nothing serious in the duties of Religion, which its Ministers themselves learn to despise; and that vice or virtue are only names, which are given more by custom and habit, than with propriety and truth.

Think not, my Reverend Brethren, that these reflections extend only to profligate Pastors—I have the confidence to believe, that there is not one such who now hears me; they extend to all who lead a careless life, who may not, perhaps, suffer great vices to appear in their conduct, but who do not shew their people any virtue; whose morals have in them nothing notorious, but likewise, nothing which inspires piety; nothing which gives offence, but likewise nothing which edifies: they are like the generality of men; they love pleasure, voluptuousness, dissipation,—they dislike prayer, study, reflection: they seek society in the world, to divert them from their duties: complaints are not made to us of their conduct; but they have no evidence of the good which they do in their several parishes.

Now, if a Pastor does not edify, he gives offence; if he discover nothing in himself, in his conversation, in his disposition, in his behaviour,

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in the whole tenor of his conduct, which excites to virtue, he tacitly, at least, encourages vice: in a word, if he is not more holy than his people, he dishonours his ministry. May these interesting reflections, my Brethren, call us often within ourselves; let us frequently, and seriously, consider, that it is not any extreme degree of guilt, which brings eternal ruin on our heads; and that there are more who shall be condemned, for not having done good in their Churches, than for having committed the most heinous sins. The barren and the dead tree are struck with the same curse: the Gospel condemns to the same darkness, and the same torments, the careless, and the unfaithful, servant.

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CHARGE X.

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CLERGY ARE TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES AMONG MEN OF THE WORLD.

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

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CHARGE X.

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CLERGY ARE TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES AMONG MEN OF THE WORLD.

NOTHING appearing to me of greater consequence, in order to support the dignity of the priesthood, than the manner in which we conduct ourselves in society, I will beg your attention to the following reflections; which, as they are affectionately offered, so they will, I trust, be willingly received.

Intended, as we are, to be the salt of the earth, we must, necessarily, mingle with it; we form but one body with the men that inhabit it; and instead of seeking at a distance, a retreat from their vices, we should, as far as lies in our power, preserve them from plunging into any, which might be either dangerous to their souls, or destructive of their peace. But, instead of stemming the torrent of wickedness, which inundates the world, we ourselves are, sometimes, carried away by its force. In order, then, to avoid the evil to which we are often exposed, we have only to lay down the rules of prudence, and the obligations of Religion, to which we are to conform; whereas,

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the contempt of them may subject us to danger, and involve us in dilemmas, out of which we cannot easily get extricated.

The first rule relates to the choice of the persons with whom you associate. For, if the world sees you out of your sphere, at riotous meetings, or with profligate companions*, will it suppose you innocent in your mind, and exemplary in your morals? Is it allowable, in a Clergyman, whose reputation is so precious to the Church, and so valuable to himself—since the whole success of his ministry depends upon it—to addict himself to a sort of life, which excites suspicion of his principles, and causes doubts of his innocence? He may declare, indeed, that the secret murmurs, and public clamours, with which he is reproached, are suggested by the malevolence, and encouraged by the envy, of his enemies. But though he should be merely imprudent, by giving rise to suspicions, would he be excusable, in not taking immediate precautions to remove them? It is not, however, sufficient for a Clergyman to be free from impropriety of conduct, he must also avoid the ap-

* "Still I do not mean that we should be sour and morose: condemn innocent Relaxations, and provoke Men to say, that we rail out of Envy, at what we have absurdly tied up ourselves from partaking of: but express our Dislike of them as mildly as the Case will bear; slight with good Humour the Indulgences, in which others falsely place their Happiness; and convince them by our Experience as well as Reasoning, how very comfortably they may live without them."—Abp. Secker.

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pearance of it. He must not sacrifice public opinion, which is so essential to the character of a Pastor, and to the honour of the Church, to a love of unjustifiable amusements, or an attachment to improper company.

It may be said, are we to withdraw from the society which is the most pleasing to us, from the friendships we have contracted, because some persons may, without cause, represent them to our disadvantage? A prepossession unfavorable to a Clergyman ought not to be entertained. "If "eating meat," says the Apostle, "offends, I will "eat no meat whilst the world standeth." Let him shut the mouth of calumny, let him respect his own character, and it will obtain respect, even from those, who, otherwise, will have great delight in misrepresenting it through meanness, and wounding it through malignity. He may prevent misrepresentation, by taking away occasion from those that seek occasion.

Alas! my brethren, what afflictions have been brought on the Church, not merely by the misconduct, but by the suspicions, to which the want of caution in the Clergy, has given rise! with what humiliating contempt have they not loaded the sacred ministry! and what occasion have they not given to men, to blaspheme the name of God, and to attribute to religion, the failings of its Ministers! But let us throw a veil over these reflections; let us not renew our grief in the presence of holy men of

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God, who demonstrate the truth of Christianity, in their discourses, and who enforce its efficacy, by their examples.

By consequence of the same rule, all intercourse with those who declare, openly, in favor of vice, and set virtue at defiance, is forbidden us; with men, whose only occupation is pleasure, and whose ridiculous boast is, of their irregularity and intemperance. What pretence can a Clergyman offer for being seen in such company? If he is agreeable to them, he participates of their works of darkness; if he gently, and not without hesitation and timidity, disapproves, he is an hypocrite, who is ashamed of himself, and not of the excess of which he is a witness. What reproach to the Church, and what disgrace to the profession, that a Minister of the Gospel should be a member of an assembly, which derives all its honour from its licentiousness and intoxication; in which he may perhaps be reckoned the most distinguished, and may arrive at such an height as to have no competitor!

You will, no doubt, reply, that all meetings are not of this description; that we find, in our intercourse with men, many of improved minds, and irreproachable morals, with whom we can associate, without endangering religion, or exposing ourselves to any risk: but you will be pleased to observe, that in the society of the world, however wise, we there breathe the air of the world, and of its maxims:

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and that it, insensibly, takes place of that orderly and correct deportment, which the dignity of the ministry so urgently requires : I repeat, that in living in the world, we adopt that behaviour which the world approves, which is far removed from the simplicity of the Gospel ; and that our powerful attachment to it arises from a conformity of sentiments. A certain proof, that the inclinations of the world are congenial with your own, and that you are not in your proper sphere, unless you are celebrating its revels, or sacrificing to its follies.

But we have, you say, need of recreations, and we cannot be, always devoted to serious pursuits. Shall a Pastor of the flock, who walks by faith, seek recreations in the midst of the world ? And what will he find there, except errors and abuses, which habit sanctions, but which religion abhors ; the Redeemer himself outraged in his maxims, ridiculed in his ordinances, often in his servants ; charity extinct through the prevalence of hatred, and the jealousy of interest ; conversation perverted by the whispers of calumny, and the insinuations of suspicion ; God either provoked or forgotten ; and the whole world become almost as dissolute, as much covered with darkness, as it was before the promulgation of the gospel. Such is the world ! and can a Minister of Christ see it, as it is, without feeling the utmost concern for its ignorance, its blindness, and profligacy ? The world can be no other than a vale of tears, in the estimation of a Minister of

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the Gospel. He observes, with sorrow, the multitudes of christians who are perishing; their melancholy fate he makes the constant subject of his lamentations and prayers:—how, then, can he rejoice over the ruins and the desolation of the holy Jerusalem,—"the city of the living God?"

What, however, is the most unreasonable is, that the Clergy, who plead the necessity of amusements, are, ordinarily, those who have the least need of them, who most neglect their duty, and the employment attached to their vocation. They are indolent Ministers, enemies of study and of meditation, and unfaithful to their calling; who loiter away their time, not to amuse, but to fly from themselves. Their life consists in an habitual indolence; we see in them nothing serious, not even the discharge of their professional obligations, which are often hurried over with an air of fatigue, of reluctance, and of indecency; what ought to be their consolation is their trouble; they hasten into the world, where they may forget their profession and themselves together.

A second rule, no less essential than the preceding, is, that our communications with the world be rare; corrupt as it is, it demands of *us*, virtue without a spot, and piety without a blemish.

The more indulgent it is to itself, the more severe it is towards us; it watches us, continually, with a

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scrutinizing and malignant eye; an unguarded expression, the least levity of behaviour, becomes, in its judgment, an unpardonable crime; and when, in order to discover greater affection for it than for ourselves, we seem to relax a little from the gravity of our character, nothing escapes its observation. It entreats us to partake in its licentious pleasures; and provided we suffer ourselves to be prevailed upon, it returns our complaisance by abusive calumnies, and opprobious accusations.

Thus, my Brethren, we deceive ourselves, by thinking that we gain the esteem and favour of the world, by familiarizing ourselves with it, and by frequently exhibiting our persons at its amusements, and devoting our affection to its pursuits. The more it sees us, the less it esteems and respects us: when, therefore, we mingle in society, let us never forget that we are the Ministers of the Holy Jesus.

If we observe the rule which has been prescribed, of appearing seldom in the world, it will be easy for us to carry thither gravity, edification, and zeal, which constitute the last rule I shall lay down for conducting ourselves with propriety; for these are the characters which are to announce to men a Minister of the Gospel.

I say, gravity.—Our manners, our conservation, our whole behaviour, ought to support the holy dignity of our calling: whatever is unbecoming our

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ministry, is unworthy of us. We often persuade ourselves, that we ought to adopt, or acquiesce in, the taste, the language, and the manners of the world, that we may not be unacceptable companions; but when the world courts, adopts, is delighted with a Minister of the Gospel, that Pastor gives a decisive proof, that he ceases to regard the decorum of his station, and the respectability of his character. And this is what we frequently observe: all those Clergyman, with whose society the world seems to be most delighted, are, generally, men of worldly minds, who preserve little more of the profession, than the name: the spirit of the world appears in the levity of their discourse, and the unseemliness of their behaviour. "If ye were of the "world," said our Lord to his disciples, "the "world would love his own; but, because, ye are "not of the world, therefore, the world hateth "you." No, my Brethren, the world does not run after an holy, and respectable Pastor: it is not solicitous to associate him to its convivial meetings, or riotous entertainments. When men of the world have need of consolation, under the afflictions with which God afflicts them—when the approach of death presents eternity to them as nigh at hand—then it is, that they have recourse to a godly Pastor. They then forsake those, whom they, before, appeared so highly to value; they perceive, that, such characters are not calculated to give relief to their minds, and consolation to their souls; that, however they may excel in the things of the world, they are out of their sphere, when they are called

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to administer comfort to the dying, by the fervency of their prayers, and the piety of their instructions. Let us not deceive ourselves; to purchase the friendship and esteem of the world, we must sacrifice a certain part of the dignity and gravity of our sacred ministry: the world does not give up, in the smallest degree, its baneful prejudices, and dangerous maxims, in order to unite itself to us: No! we must give up our consistency of character, to be admitted into its societies.

If we are witnesses of those abuses, which custom justifies in the world, we are to reprove them: if we hear conversation which is offensive to decency, and injurious to morals, the character we bear, authorizes us to censure and condemn it. For, as Tobit expresses in his prayer—"God "hath scattered us among the Gentiles, that we "might declare his greatness, and extol him be-"fore all the living; for he is our Lord, and our "Father, for ever."—It is scarcely consistent with the real character of a Clergyman, to mingle in conversation with men, and let an opportunity escape us of promoting their edification*. We

* Both the old Dissenters from our Church, and those who are now forming new Seperations, gain and preserve a surprising Influence amongst their Followers by personal religious Intercourse. Why should not we learn from them? At first such Applications may by Disuse appear strange; and have both their Difficulties and their Dangers. But the most apprehensive of them will be the safest from them: and all will

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know not, but that a plain and edifying reflection, made at a time when it is not expected, may become to our brother a word of life, and of salvation. Men go to hear our discourses from the pulpit, as it were, on their guard, and prepossessed against the doctrines we illustrate, and the precepts we enforce; but, in familiar conversation, truth takes the sinner by surprize: through this medium, friendship, mildness, simplicity, give, to unpremeditated and unexpected truth, a force and power, which other discourses usually want; but should it even be without effect, we have, at least, honoured our ministry; we have edified those whom we could not undeceive; and, attentive to the admonition of the Apostle, we have

improve their talents by Practice. On young persons you will be able to make good Impressions by Discourse with them before Confirmation: these may be renewed in private Exhortations afterwards to receive the Sacrament: and the spiritual Acquaintance thus begun, may be continued ever after. Other Means may be found with grown Persons: on the first settling of a Family in your Parish; on occasion of any great Sickness, or Affliction, or Mercy; on many others, if you seek for them, and engage worthy Friends to assist you. Even common Conversation may be led very naturally to Points of Piety and Morals; and Numbers be thus induced to reading proper Books, to public, to private, to Family Devotion, to Sobriety, Justice, Alms-giving, and Christian Love. When once you are well got into the Method, you will proceed with Ease and Applause; provided your whole Character and Conduct be consistent; else you will fall into total Disgrace; and particularly provided you convince your Parishioners, that you *seek, not theirs, but them*"—Abp. SECKER.

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sanctified our whole conversation—"Be ye holy "in all manner of conversation."

But have we not to apprehend, that we should be considered troublesome, or should expose the truth to the derision and contempt of those who hear it? Surely not. A worldly, and dissipated, Clergyman would not act consistently with his general character, were he to converse upon edifying subjects, among men devoted to the world: he forfeits that privilege, by his misconduct: it would be ridiculous to suggest to the minds of others, truths which he seems to have forgotten, as useful to himself. The doctrine of piety would blush in his mouth; it would be heard with derision, and contempt; and his companions would enquire, with bitter taunts—"Is Saul also among "the prophets?" But the opinion and advice of a godly Pastor, because they are edifying, are always well received; the world may, indeed, reject the truth, but it secretly esteems him that declares it. Upon these occasions, prudence must, invariably, be our guide; charity, whose object always is to become useful, reminds us, that we are to make a proper choice of opportunities; and how many are presented to a godly Minister, in his conversation with men of the world? They converse with him upon their projects, their disappointments, their embarrassments;—now, many are the occasions which present themselves of deploring the miserable and distracted state of those, "whose affections are set on the things

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of the earth," and of shewing them the wisdom, whatever be the issue of their schemes here, of providing for themselves a "treasure, which neither moth nor rust can destroy, and where thieves cannot break through and steal?"

Besides, there are innumerable occasions where we need not be apprehensive of being esteemed importunate, and where zeal, alone, ought to predominate. A Clergyman is a public Minister, to whom the glory of God, and the interests of religion are committed among men; wherever he may be, he ought not, through complaisance, or timidity, to listen to any one—be his rank or consequence what it may—whose discourse is directed against religion, who contemns its precepts, who proposes doubts of its divinity, or treats its holy mysteries, or distinguishing ordinances, with derision, who justifies vice, or ridicules virtue; in a word, whose licentiousness and impiety dishonour our presence, in such cases, zeal, under the direction of prudence, should be alive in our breasts. Entrusted as religion is, to our preservation, we "should know no one according to the flesh;" we should forget the names, the titles, the distinctions, of those who forget themselves; and it may be right, sometimes, to "answer a fool according to his folly;" to humble his pride by exposing his ignorance. We undertake with eagerness, and support with warmth, the defence of a friend, whose name

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is calumniated, and whose interests are injured; and, in order to stop the mouth of impiety, and to support the interests of Him, "who calls "us not servants, but friends," shall we not shew the same zeal, shall we not exhibit the same spirit? Can we persuade ourselves that we have fulfilled what the honourable title of a Minister of the Gospel requires of us, by dissimulation, by silently disapproving the attacks made upon that Gospel, which we preach, and by sacrificing, through a weakness, esteemed mean by every observer, the name and glory of him, who sealed the truth of it with his blood? No, my reverend Brethren, we are no longer the friends whom the blessed Jesus hath chosen; the title which we bear is a reproach to us, when his name, outraged by folly, and denied by blasphemy, does not awaken our love, and enkindle our zeal.

Such is the manner in which we are to live in and associate with the world; a certain society we are to shun; we are not to devote our whole time even to that which is allowed us; and gravity, edification, and zeal, are always to accompany us.

Do you, O man of God, as the Apostle styles a Minister of the Gospel, conduct yourself according to these rules, lest you cause those, to whom you deliver the word of life, to blaspheme against it.

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I address to you, in conclusion, the words of the Apostle—" Thou, O man of God!" Were you men of the world, its interests, errors, and prejudices, would be your heritage; you would then, not inconsistently, conform to its maxims, and adopt its language. But you are, individually, men of God upon earth; in the midst of the world, you are entrusted with the interests of God, with the support of his glory, and the maintenance of his worship. An ambassador of a prince speaks only in the name of his master; he lays aside the private, he exhibits only the public, man—the representative of a king. And we, my Reverend Brethren, who are men of God, in the midst of the world, shall we lay aside this holy and public character, with which we are honoured, in order that we may, with the greater freedom from restraint, become men of the world? Shall we blush to speak the language and enforce the doctrines, of him who sent us?

Forgetting the majesty of him whom we represent, and the dignity which he hath conferred upon us, by commissioning us to confess his name, and preach salvation to his people; shall we sanction, by our conduct, the maxims of that world, which is at enmity with him? Thou, O man of God! Let us bear the high title on our forehead; let us be, on every occasion, men of God: Let our most common actions, our conversation,

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our engagements be ennobled, and sanctified, by this holy and honourable character; let us never disgrace ourselves, by laying it aside. Let us never forget, that the world will respect us in it, so long as we shall respect ourselves.

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CHARGE XI.

ON THE PRUDENT CONVERSATION AND BEHAVIOUR OF THE CLERGY.

Let your moderation be known unto all men.

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CHARGE XI.

ON THE PRUDENT CONVERSATION AND BEHAVIOUR OF THE CLERGY.

REPRESENT to yourselves the Lord, whose Ministers we are, continually present with us; and as we are entrusted with the interests of His glory, His eyes incessantly upon us, lest, by levity, we should disparage, or by indecency, profane it.

Nothing is more strongly recommended to the Ministers of the gospel, than propriety of conduct. The same decorum, the same circumspection, which accompanies them to the sanctuary, ought to accompany them every where: and as they are every where the ambassadors of Christ, and represent His person, they are expected on every occasion, to support the dignity of their character, by their prudent conversation, and in the whole tenor of their actions.

I say, first, in their prudent conversation. You know what the gospel requires of all, "who are "called by the name of Christ." Our Lord declares, that all men shall give a strict account of every word which they shall utter; not only of those

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words, which according to the Apostle, ought not to be named among us; not only of filthy talking, which as the same apostle expresses it, is not becoming saints—men who have taken upon them the profession of Christianity;—not only of those words of bitterness, of hatred, of malignity, which extinguish the spirit of Christian charity in our hearts; not only of those words proceeding from wrath and passion, which rob us of the serenity and mildness, inculcated in the gospel, and indispensable in its professors; but also of every idle word.* Whence proceeds a severity so little accommodating to the weakness of fallen man? It proceeds from the first principle of our Christian calling, that we are holy; that our conversation is in heaven; that the time of our present life is but a rapid moment, intended to "work out for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and that we are not to prostitute our words, or employ our conversation, on topics which might pollute the mouth, as well as defile the heart.

If, then, the gospel requires so much circumspection and reserve in the conversation of Christians, as to esteem an idle word to be a transgression of it—what will it not require of its Ministers?

* See the five last pages of the Tenth Lecture of the Bishop of London, on St. Matthew, Vol. I.

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Can the mouth of a Christian Pastor, employed as it is, in celebrating the praises of God, and proclaiming the blessings of Redemption, open for the purpose of foolish, or profane conversation? Can his tongue, after reciting the wonderful works of Providence, after denouncing the terrors and threatenings awaiting wilful disobedience of the divine commands, pour forth, I do not say, oaths and curses, but unseemly words, indecent allusions, or disgusting levity? No! "Let my "mouth be filled with thy praise, that I may sing "of thy glory and honour, all the day long. My "mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and "salvation, for I know no end thereof. My lips "shall rejoice when I sing unto thee, and so shall "my soul, whom thou hast delivered." The lips of the Priest are to keep knowledge: the law of God is put into his mouth, to be delivered by him, to the world; and when the Holy Spirit calls us to the ministry, he sometimes addresses us, as he did the Prophet—"I have put my words in "thy mouth, and I have covered thee with the "shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the hea-"vens, and lay the foundation of the earth, and "say unto Zion, thou art my people;"—that is to say, that you make a new heaven, and a new earth, of the people committed to your charge. What inference shall we draw from this?—That our tongue is no longer our own; that it is consecrated to the service of God, and the edification of mankind. We are not to understand, that we are forbidden the pleasures of innocent society; but that

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our conversation is always to be grave, decent, and reserved; more especially when we are conversing with "our brethren, partakers of the same "holy calling," we are to promote mutual edification, and to encourage, animate, and support each other. We are, sometimes, witnesses of a great indiscretion, and observe a lamentable want of prudence, in Pastors: what is serious, edifying, becoming their profession, we do not hear; what disgusts by levity, and offends by indiscretion, may, sometimes, I fear, be attributed to us; justifying the observation, that where the heart is impure, the lips are polluted. Are these, my Brethren, the organs of the Holy Spirit? Are these the mouths consecrated to God, and appointed to bear his name, and proclaim his will, unto the world? Are these the voices which are to cry aloud, and not to spare? Are these the heralds of heaven, sent to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make the crooked paths of sinners straight? Are these the ambassadors of Christ, dispersed throughout the world, to declare unto it the word of reconciliation? Or, are they sent by his enemy, the prince of this world, in order to procure him followers, and to extend his wretched empire? How abominable, my Brethren, for a Clergyman to pollute his lips, devoted to the delivery of truths, the most awful in themselves, the most sublime in their effects! "He hath," says the Prophet, "made my mouth like a sharp sword. And he "said unto me, thou art my servant, in whom I "will be glorified." What! shall the mouth, pro-

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faned by licentious conversation, pronounce the words of righteousness, and of salvation! What can proceed from a mouth so dishonoured, which can either terrify the sinner, or comfort the righteous? The language of piety must, in such lips, "be a strange language;" insomuch, that the Holy Word, designed to confound the wicked, and to console the good, excites, in the one, contempt, and impresses the other, with sorrow. Let no one depart out of our company without deriving from it, some degree of edification, without feeling an additional respect for Religion, and its Ministers. Let all men learn, in conversing with us, how to render society, at once instructive and holy; let them learn, that circumspection, prudence, and charity, in conversation, that an amiable allowance for the faults of our neighbour, tend to make society more agreeable and desirable, than the calumny, the levity, the indecency, of ordinary discourse. Let us not, my Reverend Brethren, be afraid of losing the friendship of the Great, and the patronage of the Powerful, by the observance of these rules; they expect, from us, the observance of them. They will not send to us to partake of their amusements, and join them in their diversions, I acknowledge; but they will send to us when they want edification; when, weary of the world, and its vanities, they shall form the resolution of leading a more regular and Christian life; when, overwhelmed with adversity, they shall have need of consolation; when, struck by the hand of God with sickness or infirmity, they shall

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have recourse to our ministry, in order to appease his wrath, and repent of those offences, by which they may have become subject to his indignation*.

The next reflection to which I shall solicit your attention is, that our very relaxations are to be such as to give no offence.

That both the body and the mind have need of relaxation is attested by general experience; but this indulgence is only proper and allowable, when it disposes us to fulfil our professional duties, and when it facilitates a compliance with the observance of them. Repose is necessary, to supply us with new powers to continue our course: all the avocations which alienate us from it, which draw us aside, which create in us a dislike of our calling, propriety forbids, and Religion condemns: the sports of the field, gaming, giddy company, any of these delights, which powerfully engage our mind, and chiefly occupy our time, are surely unbecoming. For, independent of the impropriety of an employment, so indecent in a Clergyman, as addicting himself, from day to day, to the destruction of an animal or a bird, is it an exercise congenial to the humanity and gravity of our character? Does a Clergyman, with weapons

* The Second Part of this Discourse is confined to censures respecting the dress of the French Clergy, which, not being at all applicable to us, I omit.

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of destruction in his hand, breathing only blood and slaughter, represent the Great Shepherd, employed in conducting his flock in peace; or the wolf, prepared to devour, and to destroy it? "The arms of our warfare," says the Apostle, "are not carnal, but spiritual, designed to com-"bat pride, avarice, and every high thought which "exalts itself against God;" faith is our buckler; zeal for the salvation of men our sword; these are the arms committed to us by the Church, when we become her Ministers. How indecent, then, in a Pastor, to devote his time to diversions! He neglects his flock; he does not deign to succour those sheep who are perishing; and he observes with vigilant attention, and pursues, with keen impatience, the flight of a bird, or the course of an animal. After indulging himself in this barbarous exercise, does he feel disposed to go and present his person, and pour out his prayers, for the souls committed to his care, at the Throne of Grace? Do not the recollection, the seriousness, the holy fervor, essential to the proper discharge of his spiritual avocations, suffer, by the riotous dissipation, in which he has lately been so unholily engaged? What veneration can the people have for their Pastor, when they see in his hands the consecrated elements, the pledge of our salvation, whilst their minds are impressed with the reflection that they had, perhaps, on the preceding day, seen those hands employed in bearing destructive arms, directed to carry terror and death to the wild and unoffending inhabitants of the field?

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What I have said of rural diversions, I may say, also, of frequent play. A Clergyman, who is a professed gamester, is a disgrace to the Church; he loses at the gaming table, the time designed for the salvation and the sanctification of the souls redeemed by the blood of the Son of God; he loses then, the attachment to whatever is serious and sacred in his profession; the respect and the confidence of his flock; the quiet and tranquillity of his mind: he loses there his soul, by the passions inevitably attendant upon play; What does he not lose, since he there loses the spirit of his vocation, and the whole advantage of his ministry? Such are the losses which can never be repaired, with which the loss of money, however severely it may be felt, can never be put in competition.

Permit me, my Reverend Brethren, to conclude this discourse with the words of the Apostle—"Ye "have not so learned Christ; ye, who are our glory "and joy," do not thus dishonor your ministry; ye do not thus prostitute that sacred character which ye have received of the Lord Jesus; ye have not thus learned Christ. Continue then, my brethren, to conduct yourselves before your respective flocks, in a manner becoming the holiness of your calling; "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, "but as wise, redeeming the time, because the "days are evil." The reserve, the circumspection, interwoven in your whole deportment, cannot

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be too much guarded; what may be lawful, may not be expedient: consider the people who surround you, as so many censors, whose eyes, always upon you, pardon nothing, and are more disposed to construe a slight dissipation into a crime, than to excuse it, as an allowable relaxation. Let us not encrease the blindness of the world, by confirming it in its profligacy, its errors, or its prejudices, through our example; let us not become stones of stumbling, to those, to whom we are to be guides in the paths of salvation; and let us not be the severest scourge with which the Church can be afflicted;—us, whom it has honoured with its choice, and distinguished by its confidence, to become the oracles of its truth, and the dispensers of its blessings.

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CHARGE XII.

ON THE SOLICITUDE THE CLERGY OUGHT TO SHEW FOR THEIR PEOPLE, WHEN CONFINED BY SICKNESS.

Be not slow to visit the sick ; for that shall make thee to be beloved.

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CHARGE XII.

ON THE SOLICITUDE THE CLERGY OUGHT TO SHEW FOR THEIR PEOPLE, WHEN CONFINED BY SICKNESS.

I AM this day to address you upon a subject which will, I doubt not, arrest the attention, and interest the heart, of every Clergyman who hears me—which is, the care and solicitude we should shew for our flock, when they are confined by sickness. Negligence in other parts of our duty, however inexcusable in the sight of God, may, indeed, sometimes find an excuse in the judgment of men, who do not consider the nature of our engagements, and the extent of our duties: but to neglect a dying soul, betrays such a want of humanity, as to give great and serious offence to a whole parish, alarmed at beholding a wretch on the brink of death, without being assisted by his Minister, to possess himself of the comfort of hope, if he cannot arrive at the assurance of pardon.

Can a father see his children taken from him, without running to their support, and, at least, bestowing upon them his blessing, the last tokens of his tenderness and affection? Is he a Shepherd,

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or an enemy to the flock, who perceives one of his sheep weak, it may be dying, and who does not deign to approach it, to see whether he can administer to it any relief? The good Shepherd leaves his whole flock, to go after a single one that has strayed; and will you leave that which is dying before your eyes, to perish, unattended to, in the very midst of the fold?

No, my Brethren, a Clergyman who fails to visit those souls for whom he must one day give account, when they are confined by sickness, who goes, only, when he is sent for, in the last * extremity; who, after long delay, shews himself —when, from the violence of the disorder, neither the presence of the Pastor, nor the prayers appointed to be read in his dying agonies, can convey any comfort to the unhappy man; can there remain in the breast of such a Clergyman a single sentiment of Religion: can he be otherwise than seized with horror at the reflection, that that soul is going to appear before the awful tribunal of God? What will it answer, in the severe examination which it is to undergo, when it departs from the body, of the use it has made of its sickness, of the restitution of goods unjustly acquired, of "repentance towards God, and faith towards "our Lord Jesus Christ?" What will be the answer it will make?—He, Lord, whom thou

* The visits of the Clergy can, at that juncture, do no good, and are rather to be discouraged, than promoted.

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didst appoint to support my weakness, and encrease my faith, in the sickness with which it pleased thee to visit me, he, whose duty it was to have taught me, by his instructions, and enabled me by his consolations, to bear it with submission, as a just punishment for the sins of my life, left me on that bed of sickness and of sorrow—although I was about to hear from thy own mouth the decisive decree of eternity—unwilling to give up any part of his time to preserve a soul whom thou hadst redeemed. Such will be the answer: and can a Minister of a Parish be persuaded of this, and dare to neglect those over whom he is appointed to watch, in the time of sickness, and in the hour of death? The souls committed to your * care should, in this state of weakness, claim the greatest share of your attention, and their salvation should be the constant subject of your prayers: your condemnation, or your apology, will form the first article of the severe examination they

* "Relieving, or obtaining relief for such as are distressed in their circumstances: hearing your people willingly and patiently, though perhaps low in Rank, or weak in Understanding, when they would consult you upon any difficulty, and answering them with consideration and tenderness; disposing them to be visited when sick, praying by them with fervency, exhorting and comforting them with fidelity, compassion, and prudence; and reminding them strongly, yet mildly, after their recovery, of their good thoughts and purposes during their illness; will be further proofs, very beneficial and engaging ones, of your seriousness: which however you must complete by going through every other office of religion with dignity."—Abp. SECKER.

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will undergo at the tribunal of God. What motive more interesting to prompt you to go to their support! to leave every engagement, in order to administer to them consolation, to give them the most affecting marks of your zeal and love, and to melt them into sorrow, by the lively and sincere interest you take in their salvation!

Should you, on any other occasion, neglect to discharge your duty, you may always flatter yourselves that your negligence can be repaired; but if you suffer a sick person to die, without endeavoring to prepare him for eternity, you are left without a possibility of atoning for you fault.—The unhappy being had, through your means, lost those precious moments which the goodness of God had reserved for him in the support of your ministry: there is no resource; his reprobation hangs, continually over your head: and what shall you be able to offer unto God, to compensate for the loss of a soul redeemed at so great a price? Moreover, the case of your sick parishioners is the only opportunity you have of repeating and encreasing your assiduity and your concern for them, of repairing all the negligences, which, may, during your life, have rendered you accountable for their salvation. It is an happy conjuncture for you, which the Almighty seems to have put into your hands, to the end that you may restore to him a soul, whom your inattention, your want of pastoral solicitude, had left easy and unconcerned, without a feeling of remorse, or, it may be, with

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scarce a desire of salvation. Can you, then, when you are acquainted, that God has struck that soul with sickness, prefer, to a duty, so awful and interesting, both to him and yourself—an useless visit, or an idle conversation—a party at play, or a series of amusements? Must the extremity of sickness drag you by force, as it were, in spite of yourself, and oblige you to repair to the sick person, to whom, as I have already observed, your presence and the prayers you offer up, can be of no service? What can be the motive of a Minister in going, after the most unjustifiable delay, to a dying man? To inspire him with sentiments of grief for his past life? To exhort him to bring to remembrance the number, and the continuance of his sins? All, alas! is too late; and can a clergy man, in his conscience, believe himself clear from all accusation of neglect of duty, in the sight both of God and man, because he went, when he was sent for, to read over him the prayers of the Church, and administer to him, when his reason had almost forsaken him, the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord? Can he beseech God to send his holy angels to receive and defend that soul from all the invisible powers of darkness, and to supplicate these heavenly spirits to present it in the presence of God? What are they to present to this adorable Being?—They are to offer to "the Great Preserver of men," a soul, of whom you, who was the Pastor, have become the cruel destroyer. What, then, can you expect, but that, like the servants, as related by our Saviour in the

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parable, they should beseech the Lord of the Harvest, that he would suffer them "to go and gather up the tares" out of his divine field? That they should solicit him no longer to permit souls, created for the immortal society of saints and angels, to perish through the negligence of so indolent a Minister? I cannot describe the uneasiness I feel, when I hear of persons dying without any expressions of repentance, without their giving any reason to believe they have made their peace with God —especially, when the Minister has failed in his duty, which consisted in entreating them to call earnestly upon God, if haply he would answer.

As, however, it sometimes happens, that the most plausible excuses are offered by the Clergy, in their justification, I will add one other reflection, which may not be inapplicable to many who now hear me, and which may in a more especial manner, awaken in them an attention and solicitude, which are indispensable on their part, towards their sick parishioners. The discourses which you delivet, from the pulpit, are generally addressed to hearers in the full possession of health: death, eternity, the future punishments to be inflicted on the impenitent, are subjects which health, spirits, the hope of long life, present to them, as at a distance, and which, in consequence, are cursorily noticed, or almost immediately forgotten: if they are affected at all, it is, ordinarily, with a slight and transient emotion, which, only for an instant, disturbs their peace, or awakens their ap-

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prehensions. Melancholy experience, alas! often makes us mourn over the small advantage derived by our auditory from our exhortations, with whatever judgment they are adapted, and with whatever energy enforced; and we have the renewed sorrow of seeing many depart from the public worship of Almighty God, after hearing the most awful truths, and return, without compunction, to the commission of those very vices, which we had been endeavouring to convince them, would subject them to the wrath of God, and the punishment of the damned. But the instructions which we offer to a sinner, overwhelmed with infirmities, and menaced with death, are seldom delivered in vain: he feels that the body, for which alone he had always lived in subjection to disorderly passions, is ready to fall into corruption; he anticipates death, eternity, hell, and all those torments of which he had always lost sight: the grand and awful truths of the Gospel, which had appeared to him no other than as phantoms, become real, and alight at once, if I may use the expression, on his affrighted soul; one single exhortation then, dictated by zeal, and accompanied with charity; one single reflection upon that forgetfulness of God, in which he has always lived, and upon the account he is going to give, is productive of the happiest effects: not one of your words then "returns unto you void;" his eyes open, his heart—hitherto engaged with the things of the world, which are, he sees, fleeting and evanescent—fixes on the only object which claims, or which deserves, his atten-

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tion; he deplores his error and his blindness; he acknowledges, with confusion, that God, alone, hath had no part in the several occupations which have filled the entire course of his life; he feels the whole unreasonableness, ingratitude, and enormity, of his sins, and the just punishment which, he believes, he cannot escape; you console and support him, with the hope of pardon, founded on the infinite value of the blood of Christ, and upon the inexhaustible mercy of God, who never rejects the sinner, when, with a sincere and penitent heart, he returns to "the Rock of his Salva-"tion:" you have the satisfaction of being witness to his sorrow and lamentations, and of seeing the humiliation and remorse with which his heart is penetrated, painted on his dying features; and should the moment, which separates the soul from the body, arrive, how great is your consolation, in being able to say—Go, Christian soul, return into the bosom of God, from which you originally proceeded, and present, at his tribunal, your repentance, which will, we hope, be accepted by the Father of Mercies, and the God of all consolation*. Now, can a Pastor avoid being affected with such an awful scene—a scene so calculated to alleviate the cares, and recompense the

* This is a very dangerous doctrine. Let every Minister inculcate upon his hearers the great support derived from an exemplary life, from the conscientious discharge of the several duties of their station, rather than trust to the expectation of an holy death, the reality of which is, at the best, doubtful; and the effect uncertain.

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troubles of the sacred ministry? Can a Pastor, by delays, deprive his sick parishioner—under any pretence whatever—of the support which he so justly demands of him? Shall the rigour of the season, the badness of the road, the interruption of sleep, a slight indisposition, be alleged as excuses for protracting, to another time, the exercise of a function, when there is not a moment to lose? Such are the pretences by which Pastors, in other respects irreproachable, suffer themselves to be seduced. The rigors of the season?—But would this prevent you, when expedition was required, from going to solicit a benefice, or take possession of a dignity? and do you thing diligence less necessary, when you are to go to assure your brother of a place in heaven, and of an hereditary title to an eternal kingdom? Did the Apostolical Ministers, whom we have succeeded, observe times and days, in going to the support of their brethren? They went, "in fastings, in cold, and nakedness." The difficulty of the way? But the good Shepherd goes to seek his sheep across mountains, which can scarce be traversed; and shall the ways seem difficult to a Minister of the Gospel, who is going to shew to a soul the way to heaven?—The interruption of sleep? But, not to take from your indolence an hour sleep, do you not dread, lest, by your delays, you precipitate your brother into the eternal sleep of death?—Lastly, a slight indisposition?—But let us, my Brethren, often reflect, that Christ Jesus, in his last agonies, and under the utmost severity of torment, did not re-

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fuse his support to a wretch, expiring at his side, who was acknowledging his power, and imploring his mercy; and shall a trifling interruption of health render you insensible to the cries of a sinner, who solicits the support of your ministry? And does it appear to you more dangerous to expose, for a moment, your health, than the eternal salvation of a soul, committed to your care, and which is, perhaps, on the brink of perdition? Is it not then, that you should adopt the language of the Apostle—"When I am weak, then am I strong?" My feebleness is on the point of becoming a new source of power and courage. A Shepherd, surely, should be always ready to lay down his life for his sheep; and do you not think a slight effort a duty you owe to your flock, which might, at the most, retard a few days the return of your health? We do not require of you the zeal and the courage of the first Ministers of the Gospel, who considered death, to which they were every day exposed, as the greatest gain, and the highest reward they could receive for their labors. It is now, as it was at the commencement, and will continue to the end, that it is not for ourselves that we are Pastors, but for the souls committed to our charge: upon this fundamental truth is the sacred ministry established: to those souls, over whom the Church has made us overseers, we owe, not only our solicitude, our strength, our talents, but our very life; and although, in order to discharge so sacred and honourable an obligation, we should exhaust our strength, ought

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we to regret a loss, productive of such advantage to others, and of such glory to ourselves*? Would not the weakness and infirmity which might arise from our labours, and from an attachment to our duty, abound with more consolation, and fill us with greater satisfaction, than a life prolonged to old age, passed in indolence, and consumed in vanity? And should our days be often shortened, ought we not to rejoice at having changed them for days of happiness which will never end †?

* I need not remind the reader, that these are the sentiments, not of a Protestant, but of a Catholic Prelate.

† An unhappy prejudice prevails among the Members of our Church, which is, that if, upon their death-bed, a Clergyman prays with them, and administers to them the Holy Sacrament, however wicked may have been their lives, they may die in the hope of salvation. It is, I believe, owing to this unfortunate, I had almost said, this fatal prepossession, that so very many defer to "repent and amend," and communicate worthily; appeasing remorse, and suppressing alarm, with the deceitful persuasion, that, by joining with their Minister in prayer, and receiving, at his hands, the consecrated elements, when they shall not have an opportunity of relapsing into sin, their peace will be made with God. May it be the earnest and successful endeavour of every Minister of the Gospel to warn his hearers against so dangerous a delusion!

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CHARGE XIII.

THE PERNICIOTS EFFECTS OF AVARICE IN THE CLERGY.

The love of money is the root of all evil.

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CHARGE XIII.

THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF AVARICE IN THE CLERGY.

IT may at first sight seem improper to expatiate on the revenues of the Church, before an assembly of Clergymen, whose ecclesiastical incomes are little more than adequate to their support. The mediocrity which is your lot, exempts you, in your judgment, from the suspicion of misapplying the patrimony consecrated to the service of the Church; you mistake; this mediocrity ought to render every misapplication less common; whereas it often occasions the abuse, and is, in your eyes, a justification of it. The abundance does not produce the fault; it is in the manner of acquiring, and of possessing it when acquired; the danger does not always consist in your revenues being great or small, but in the rapacity and unfeeling manner in which you exact them—in the attachment to, and sordid use you make of them*.

* "A due Measure of Disinterestedness is one Requisite for the Success of a Clergyman's Labours. You will therefore avoid all mean Attention to small Matters. You will be very tender in your Demands upon the Poor, and very equi-

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It might be hoped, that no rapacity could well be exercised, in collecting the revenues of the Church: but this, unhappily, not being the case, we are to remember what the Apostle exacts, as the very first principle of the Ministers of the Gospel—that they leave no room to suspect they are "given to filthy lucre." Our whole ministry is a ministry of charity, of disinterestedness, of edification: what a character, then, for a Pastor to sell, hardly and rigorously, his services to his children—to be a severe and inexorable extortioner, unconcerned about the ruin or the salvation, of his flock, and solely occupied in the temporal advantages, which he shamefully derives from it! Are the instructions of a Pastor of this character, without fruit? Do they "return unto him void?" —He feels no uneasiness. Is his whole life passed, without having established the principles of Christianity in the heart, and produced the effects of it, in the conduct, of one single hearer?—His indifference leaves him without apprehension for the event. He does not lament the inutility of his labours: he does not, as he ought, view it with sorrow, and contemplate it with horror;

table towards the Rich; though you will conscientiously preserve all the material rights, with which you are entrusted for your successors. If you find room and reason to improve your income, you will prove that no wrong motive induces you to it, by going as far as ever you are able in acts of good natured, and especially of pious, liberality. For nothing gives greater or juster offence, than to see a clergyman intent upon hoarding, or luxurious, or splendid, instead of being charitable."—Abp. Secker.

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but, let his services not bring him the vile and abject recompense, that he expected for them, his uneasiness is expressed on every occasion; he considers his diligence thrown away, and begins to experience the chagrin, of being an useless workman. The dignity of our ministry, I feel, blushes at such a charge being brought against a labourer in the Lord's vineyard; and, it is not without reluctance, that, before an assembly so respectable as that which I am now addressing, I introduce so unpleasing a subject. But with whom can I lament over such abuses, but with you, my Brethren, who are not unacquainted with them? Were these concerns, like many others, concealed in the bosom of the sanctuary, we might dissemble them; but by this mercenary rapacity, which is circumscribed by no bounds of decency or moderation, the Pastor becomes odious and contemptible to his flock, and Religion, in the judgment of a gross and ignorant people, a sordid gain, a dishonourable traffic*.

* I once heard a distinguished Prelate, prove the utility of tythes to the farmer, when paid, not to the Impropriator, (who, however wealthy, is said to be invariably rigorous) but to the Parson. The Rector, in general, does not demand more than half the real value of the tythe: the landlord, if the land be tythe free, lets his farm at a rent, considerably above what the farmer would pay to the Clergyman, in lieu of tythes; so that the farmer gains the difference, of what he does not pay to the Clergyman, and of what he would pay to the landlord. But this reasoning is upon the supposition, that every Clergyman is very moderate in his demands. That this is a promi-

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I well know, that such a want of principle, and such an absence of Religion, pervade many people, that they would deprive you of your just rights: but let me observe, that there are very many Clergyman, who, by their zeal, their piety, their disinterestedness, are, in the estimation of their parish,

nent feature in the character of the British Clergy, almost every farmer, who compounds for his tythes, proclaims with satisfaction, and acknowledges, with gratitude. But, among so many beneficed Clergyman, it is to be expected, that a few individuals, some compelled by necessity, and others, actuated by avarice, will either claim, nearly the value, or receive their tythes in kind: in which case, not only the advantages, accruing from the payment of tythes, to the farmer, are, during such incumbency, suspended, but quarrels and litigations often ensue, always pernicious to the interests of Religion, and to the stability of the Church. To adopt any mode of compensation, whereby, at once, to satisfy the clamorous, to preserve to the Clergy their legitimate rights, and to render the ministry useful, as it ought to be, has hitherto baffled the wisdom of the wise, and overturned the plans of the speculative.

It may not be thought improper to add, that where the great Tythes are in the hands of a Layman, and there is a necessity for the services of two Clergymen, arising either from laborious duty—a Chapel attached to the Mother-Church, at the latter of which there is service twice in the day—or from any other cause—that the Impropriator, if he has both the Vicarial and Rectorial Tythes, ought, in justice, to discharge the whole; if only the latter, the half, of the Curate's stipend. The Legislature intended, no doubt, to do justice to the Curates; but the great Tythes having, originally, belonged to the Church,—if the Legislature felt themselves warranted to alienate a part of the Vicar's pittance—would it have been other than retributive justice to have bound the Impropriator under the same obligation? This subject will, I trust, soon be illustrated and enforced by abler pens.

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most valuable Ministers, and who, far from going to the extent of their claims, know how to abate of their legal demands, and to compassionate the wants of their parishioners, on occasions where charity and humanity demand it of them. There have been instances, however, where some have refused to pay to their Pastor, the rights attached to his office, being first irritated by the rapacity of the Pastor himself, whose claims have been unreasonable, and his demands oppressive. It may indeed, generally, be said, that the altercations which happen in parishes, between the Pastor and his flock, are confined to those Clergymen, who, in their conduct, are neither the most edifying, the most charitable, nor the most exemplary, in the diocese.

Such is the first abuse I had to mention—the rigour in exacting your revenues: the second is, an imposing avarice, which, after having been so strict in the exaction, refuses them towards the support of those who are in distress.

You know, my Brethren, and melancholy experience confirms the observation every day, that the Clergy, the most severe, and the most rapacious, in claiming their rights, often live with the greatest meanness. Were those Pastors, who are so avaricious, charitable to their neighbours, their conduct would, in this, at least, be worthy of our admiration, and entitled to our applause: but a mean and contemptible avarice

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renders them still harder, and more insensible, to the wants of the poor, whom they have daily before their eyes.

This vice seems to be a curse attached to the priesthood; and, to what disgrace does it not subject the dignity of our holy calling? We see Clergymen defile their characters, with the lowest and most ignominious occupations; running every where; more skilled in making a bargain than other men; leaving their Churches, suffering the souls entrusted to them to perish, that they may not lose an opportunity of gain; and appearing often at public meetings, in an unseemly and unclerical garb, and authorizing, by their intemperance, drunkenness, and revellings, so common in such * places. At this I am not surprised: an avaricious and mercenary Pastor is capable of any thing: every good principle is suppressed; every feeling that is honourable to human nature is extinct in his bosom; charity, religion, even decorum, and the respect that he owes to his situation:

* Is it not exceedingly to be lamented that the Clerical Bills lately passed, which afford universal satisfaction, did not prohibit Incumbents from acting as agents to men of fortune? I know nothing more disreputable in itself, nor more injurious to the cause of religion, than the custom now, unhappily too prevalent, of Clergymen attending fairs and markets, to buy and sell stock for gentlemen, whose *servants* they, virtually, become; estimating the value, and raising the rents, of farms; superintending workmen, &c. &c. thereby debasing their clerical character, and casting an indelible stain upon the Church.

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he is possessed of an inherent meanness, incapable of any of those noble sentiments, suggested by the duties, and enforced by the reverence, of the priesthood. When he is called into another scene of existence, he leaves scandal and derision in the public mind, mortification and sorrow in the hearts of all those, to whom are entrusted the interests of the Church, and the honour of Religion.— "They that will be rich," says the Apostle, "fall "into temptation and a snare, and into many fool- "ish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in des- "truction and perdition. For the love of money "is the root of all evil: which, while some "have coveted after, they have erred from "the faith, and pierced themselves through with "many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee "these things; and direct thy endeavours to "fol- "low after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, "patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of "faith; lay hold on eternal life."

As to you, my Brethren, who are the support, and the whole consolation of my Episcopate; you who know, that the Church hath not ordained Ministers for themselves, but in order to be "men "of God," to whose exertions, the advancement of his glory, and the preservation of his interests, are committed, among mankind; do you continue to shun these abuses, so full of affliction to the Church, and of reproach to its Ministers. "Fol- "low after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, "patience, meekness." Continue to give to your

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people examples of exemplary conduct, and of evangelical righteousness: let them learn, from your disinterestedness, how much they ought to detach themselves from the goods of this life. Remember, that "godliness is great gain"—that a religious Pastor, who possesses the love and confidence of his people, possesses every thing, and wants nothing;* and that his rights are incontrovertibly ascertained, seeing they are founded on the affection and respect of his parishioners. By invariably appearing, yourselves, always to value and reverence, whatever has any relation to Religion and Salvation, you will induce your flock to cultivate faith, and practise Religion: know then, no greater gain than that of the souls who are entrusted to you; and let their salvation be a recompense, of all others, the most honourable, the most consolatory, and the most desirable of your labours. Be tender-hearted, and charitable towards them: suffer with them that suffer, and weep with them that weep: be the common father of your people; ever ready to succour them, in the day of necessity: charity makes no exceptions and remember, that whatever you have, and whatever you are—you are all for them. Do not be discouraged by an apprehension, that the solicitude you feel, and the discourses you deliver, to your hearers, are in vain; God

* The reader will recollect, that these Discourses were addressed to a body of men, who were forbidden the domestic comforts, so wisely permitted to the Protestant Clergy.

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does not always recompense the Pastor, by the instant and visible reformation of the flock; make a choice selection of the holy seed, sow it with care, water it with diligence: He, "who gives the "increase," will know how to make it fruitful, in his own good time. Lastly, let not the faults and misconceptions of the people committed to our care, justify our warmth of temper, and deprive us of that mildness and gentleness, in our carriage towards them, which are so becoming the sacred ministry; let our engaging behaviour, uniformly shewed towards them, be an indication of the affections of our heart: zeal which exasperates, and which excites to revolt, those whom it censures, is the zeal of man, it is not the zeal of God: we must gain their hearts, if we would render them attentive to our instructions; severe manners, rather indicate our dispositions, than tend to correct theirs. Not humour, rudeness, passion—No! it was charity, as described by the Apostle, which established truth upon earth; our Lord sent not lions, but lambs, to preach it: their mildness, and their sufferings, promoted the work of the Gospel; and by these means must their successors continue to spread it among men: by following this advice, concludes the apostle—"You will not only save "yourselves, but those that hear you."

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CHARGE XIV.

ON MILDNESS AND GENTLENESS.

Be patient towards all men.

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CHARGE XIV.

ON MILDNESS AND GENTLENESS.

I SHALL request your attention, whilst I this day expatiate on a subject interesting to every Clergyman—the mildness of temper, which, if he be solicitous for the success of his ministry, he will invariably shew to the people committed to his charge, in his intercourse with them.

From the time we are Fathers and Pastors of the flock, mildness, tenderness, affection, should, without question, constitute the reigning principle of our character. It is, notwithstanding, but too true, that we often substitute a wayward humour, a false zeal, a spirit of dominion, for that engaging affection which should entirely influence our heart, and direct our conduct, as the only way, whereby we can become useful in our calling. My design is, as I have already intimated, to recommend mildness of temper, and gentleness of carriage, in your behaviour and intercourse with your parishioners.

Humour often predominates. If, when we were ordained to the sacred ministry, a change had been

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produced in our mind, as well as in our situation; if our sentiments derived the same elevation as our character; if the Holy Spirit, when we received imposition of hands, suggested our principles, regulated our morals, and repressed our inclinations, it would be useless to recommend to you a virtue, which would be inherent in us: but, unhappily, we carry into this holy state, all the defects of our birth and education; the sacred character which constitutes the Pastor, makes no change in that which has formed the man; and a Clergyman, born with an ungracious, overbearing, haughty spirit, when appointed to a parish, far from finding in himself, the new quality of a Father and a Pastor, to operate as a restraint on his inclinations, and to become a powerful motive to mildness and gentleness, finds only new occasions of pride, caprice, and passion. Hence, so many complaints of the violence, and haughtiness of the Clergy. Actuated by such principles, what good can a Preacher of the Gospel expect to do in his parish, when the manners of its inhabitants, are, it is probable, uncultivated and almost barbarous? He will be disgusted with the brutality of his parishioners; and they, in their turn, will despise him, for the severe and haughty spirit, which they perceive in him: his ministry will be a perpetual scene of trouble and vexation; his temper will even profane the sanctity of the word; his discourses will be considered as public invectives against his hearers; and the Gospel, which breathes only peace and reconciliation, will be, in his mouth,

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no other than a display of dissention and hostility: these are not mere conjectures; the complaints which are frequently made, confirm our just apprehensions.

We, who are Fathers, are to bear with the perverseness of children: a Pastor, who has not reduced his spirit to this submission, will never be useful. His mildness and gentleness, I allow, are often put to severe trials: a gross and ignorant people, do not always consider, what is proper and becoming. Then it is, that we are to oppose a paternal complacency to their rudeness, and to restrain and soften them, by our conciliating address, and engaging demeanor. It would be useless, as St. Paul recommends, more especially, to us, to "be patient towards all men," if we no where had occasion for the exercise of "a meek spirit." The reason we give way to impatience is, that, as we are exposed, perpetually, to the rustic and importunate manners of our parishioners, we do not consider, that they only make use of their privilege, in their applications to us: injudicious they may be, in not consulting propriety, but still, we cannot plead an excuse for not hearing them: their indiscretions may, occasionally, try our temper, but they do not lessen our obligations. Thus, the grosser and more untoward our people are, the more are patience and gentleness, necessary in a Pastor, to restrain them. Notwithstanding all their rudeness, a single word, uttered with mildness, calms them: impatience and warmth do

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not correct *their* faults; they only expose *ours*: they do not shelter us from their importunities, but they make us lose their love, and forfeit their confidence.

A Pastor, concerned for the welfare of the souls committed to his charge, will see it to be his bounden duty, to sacrifice his natural impetuosity of temper, in order to attach them to him, and to open for his instructions, a way to their hearts. The first Ministers of the Church, were sent as lambs in the midst of wolves; and the mildness and gentleness of the one, subdued the fierceness and violence of the other. We have succeeded to their mission, as well as to their ministry; we are sent in their place, as lambs among wolves. Had we, like our holy predecessors, to dread their barbarity—were the most cruel torments the only reward we could promise ourselves, for our indefatigable labours, and unremitted zeal, we must either renounce Christ and the ministry, or resolve to attack them, until we had overcome their outrageous passions, and subdued their unruly wills. What! can we, my Brethren, be considered excusable, by losing, on slight provocations, the command of ourselves, inseparable from a right discharge of the Christian ministry? Alas! we act upon a wrong principle—we are accustomed to demand to our *person*, the respect which is due to our *calling*: we esteem ourselves as superiors, and not as servants and Ministers.

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A second fault attendant upon our ministry is, a spirit of dominion, than which nothing is more opposite to that humility which ought to accompany us, in every ministerial function. The princes of this world, as our Saviour observed to his disciples, exercise with rigour, the authority they have over their subjects: pride, haughtiness, and splendour, constitute their dignity; gentleness, humility, modesty, shall be the distinguishing ornaments of yours; they consider themselves as lords over vassals; you shall be, in your own eyes, as servants and brethren. Can the situation, which, in committing souls to our care, renders us bound to all, and responsible for all, inspire us with pride, and exalt us with haughtiness? What is there to swell the heart in offices, the chief advantage of which is, to impose on us many labours, and to exact a correct, and conscientious, discharge of them?

Notwithstanding, under the pretence of supporting the honours and authority of this ministry, we are inexorable to the most trifling offences, which seem to derogate from it; we exact respect and deference, not so much to ensure reverence for Religion, as consequence to ourselves; the smallest infringement made upon our rights, alienates our affections, and sinks deep into our minds; we make of authority, a yoke which oppresses the souls, whose charge we have undertaken, and not a support, designed for their comfort: we forget that our revenues are entitled to our estimation, only

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in proportion as they afford us an opportunity of being serviceable; that they have been entrusted to us only, to facilitate the success of our labours, and not to be an obstacle to them; to attract more reverence for Religion, and not more dignity to our station; to render our virtuous examples more public, and more beneficial, and not our authority more burdensome and intolerable. Mankind are but too much disposed to look with jealous eyes, on the temporal advantages, of which some of the Clergy are possessed; and from the moment that they doubt the existence of virtue and Religion, in our hearts, they doubt the validity of our title to our revenues: the more exact and rigid we are in the improvement of them, the more disputable does our right appear; the more severe we are, the more do our parishioners withstand us; and when, at length, we have recourse to the support of the law, let us contrast our gain of money, with the loss of their affections, and of their confidence. Is this to honour our ministry, or to make it useless.

But it is our duty, you say, to support the rights of the Church. Yes. Let us support them, by the superiority of our virtues: it is not for ourselves that we are Ministers, it is for the people at large; let us devote ourselves to them, without reserve, without interest, without any other view than that of their salvation: let this motive alone lessen our pains, and recompense our labours: let us be weak with the weak; let us weep with them that weep;

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let us extend our hand to them that are falling; let us bear with them that resist, and, by our patience, conquer their obstinacy; let us, in one word, "become all things to all men." There is in a worthy Pastor, an engaging modesty, a paternal disinterestedness, which impress more veneration, and afford greater security to his rights, than all the eagerness and vigilance which a worldly Minister can exert in the support of them.

We allow, you observe, that a Clergyman, living under the influence of disgusting pride, or ungovernable passion, cannot preserve that pastoral gentleness which is so necessary to attract the love, and ensure the confidence, of his parish; but how shall he correct the disorders which are prevalent in it, if he does not discover a zeal, which may seem almost incompatible with the mildness now recommended?

You cannot countenance irregularities—you are right; but often in shewing a disposition to correct them, we provoke and exasperate the objects of our reproof: some Clergyman speak to their parishioners with the haughtiness of a superior, and not with the tenderness of a father. Charity, indeed, which is the parent of zeal, never faileth; it does not propose the ostentation of authority, but the amendment of the transgressor. If we appear to seek an occasion of indiscriminately censuring our flock, they will look upon us rather as hostile to their persons, than displeased at their

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offences. Let us remember that our Blessed Master passed for the friend of sinners, by the divine mildness with which he received them, by the holy familiarity with which he honoured them, by the joy with which he assured them, that the conversion of a single individual was a subject of congratulation and joy to the angels in Heaven. Let us call to mind his tears over unbelieving Jerusalem: He more frequently wept over the sins of the people, than aggravated them by his reproaches: his prayers for them always prepared success for his instructions: Let us, my Brethren, mourn and humble ourselves before God: Let us increase our prayers, in proportion as the sins of our congregations are increased; and, instead of suffering our affections to be alienated from them, through their obstinacy, let us strive to make our vigilance more persuasive, and our zeal more engaging.

I would not be understood, by recommending to you mildness and gentleness, in the exercise of the Ministry, to authorise indolence and insensibility, in a Pastor, in the midst of the degeneracy of his flock: the good temper required of a Clergyman, is not without bowels of compassion for sinners; but he is full of indignation at their vices. A Minister, whom the profligacy of his parish, of which he is a witness, does not affect, does not interest, and who sanctions it by his silence, is not kind and compassionate; he is no better than an idol, which hath eyes, and sees not, a tongue,

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and speaks not, an heart which does not feel. God forbid that his inattention to the profligacy of his people should proceed from a desire that they should shew the same to himself! No, my Brethren, a Pastor who sees, with indifference, the depraved morals of his parishioners, is either without religious principle, or is himself as depraved as the sinners, at whose profligacy he connives.

Not one of such a character, I persuade myself, will be found in this assembly; but there is another sort of mildness, and gentleness in a Minister, less odious, it is true, though perhaps, not less dangerous: there are Pastors, who are inactive, more studious of their own quiet, than interested in the salvation of the souls committed to them: they connive at every thing, in order that they may not irritate the minds, and alienate the hearts, of their parishioners from themselves: in a word, in order that they may enjoy, with more ease, and less interruption, a situation, the vigilance and exactness essential to the proper discharge of which, might have disturbed their repose. Now, this is not the evangelical gentleness of which every Pastor ought to be possessed; it is the indolence of an hireling. And what can be more reproachful to a Minister of the Gospel, than to be esteemed and beloved by a degenerate people, by whom his saviour is hated, or forgotton, or despised? What can be the advantage of pleasing men, if he have the misfortune to displease God? If God condemns, can men justify,

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him? Besides, does he not know that it is not possible to please men—if, in so doing, he is to neglect his duty—and to be the servant of Jesus Christ? Whoever, in such a way, expects to conciliate the love of his people, forfeits it: the more desirous they perceive us to be of pleasing them, through the fear of censuring negligence, and reproving immorality, the less do they hesitate to occasion us chagrin, and even to treat us with contempt. Let us not deceive ourselves: the rudest and most ignorant esteem us no farther than as they are convinced we are possessed of upright principles, and undissembled virtue. Aaron permitted the Israel to make a molten calf, and then to fall down and worship it—what reward did he obtain for his unwarranted indulgence? That very people disputed with him the sovereign priesthood. We lose more than we gain, in the minds of our hearers, when we would conciliate their esteem by the sacrifice of our duty.

The pastoral tenderness which we should shew for sinners, is mild and conciliating—but it is not indulgent to their vices. Let the edification and salvation of those committed to our care be our only object, in the accomplishing of which we may, with propriety, endeavour to please them: let us strive to become agreeable, only, as we can be useful: we are not to be judged by the love and affection men may entertain for us, but by the benefit they may have derived from our Ministry: let us not seek ourselves in the discharge of our

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Ministerial duty, let us seek, only, the interests of Christ, and we shall, without difficulty, find, that in the proper exercise of our pastoral functions, we are equally to avoid both the excess of outrageous zeal, and the timidity of criminal indulgence.

Such is the evangelical gentleness which I recommend to your observance; every other, which tends rather to please sinners, than to lead them to be displeased with themselves, and which, through the apprehension of disturbing our own quiet, refrains from alarming them with a sense of guilt, is not "the wisdom which comes from above," which descends from the Father of Lights; it is, on the contrary, "earthly, sensual, and devilish:" Whereas genuine pastoral mildness, is distinguished by very opposite characters. First, it is liberal and disinterested. It is not personal advantage which brings it into action: it seeks its repose and happiness only in its duty; the friendship of men is no otherwise beloved, in its estimation, then as it renders them the friends of God.

It is, secondly, peaceable. It is not in encouraging dissipation; it is in exciting by its remonstrances, a remorse in the heart, that the true evangelical mildness, by which a godly Minister is always actuated, brings real peace among his flock; his zeal alarms sinners, but it makes them angry only with themselves; in carrying war into the heart, he, under such benign influence, introduces tranquillity, and establishes comfort in families;

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the sword of the Word in his mouth, which pierces the inmost recesses of the soul, changes it into an habitation of peace and love: his pacific gentleness calms all violent dissentions, conciliates the enraged mind, and teaches it the pardon of injuries, and the delights of reconciliation, by paying kindness, and accumulating blessings, in return for provocations and outrage.

To comprise all the characters of gentleness in one reflection: this divine wisdom has bowels of compassion for the miserable and wretched. Touched with their calamities and their miseries, it reaches out to them an helping hand: it does not content itself with weeping over them; it demonstrates its feelings, by its support; it laments, indeed, that its circumscribed means are insufficient for their wants: far from exacting, with severity, its rights, it distributes to the needy of its own substance: thus, it every day sees the fruits of the ministry increase, together with those of mercy and compassion.

Meditate continually, my beloved Brethren, on these things, never lose sight of them in the exercise of your ministry, in order that the public success of your labours may become the glory of the Church, and the eternal monuments of your zeal, in your several parishes—in order that both Minister and people may enter together into the joy of their Lord.

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CHARGE XV.

ON THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

Continuing instant in prayer.

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CHARGE XV.

ON THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

TO be instant in prayer is not an obligation peculiar to the sacred calling. It is the most essential duty of Christianity: every Christian is expected to be a man of prayer: his views, his desires, his hopes, his conversation, all, according to the Apostle, are to be in Heaven: every Christian is a citizen of the world to come; all the external objects which surround him here below, should be, in his estimation, as bonds and obstacles, which, retarding his course, and prolonging his pilgrimage, ought to enflame his desires towards his own country; the seductions of the world, innocent as they may appear, should all conspire to warn him to raise, continually, his thoughts on high; to send up thither his sighs and prayers; to address himself "to the faithful and invisible "Witness in heaven," and to his only Protector, from whom he receives consolation and support. Every Christian, then, is a man of prayer: and a Christian who does not pray, is without God, without Religion, without hope. This incontrovertible truth once established, is it not our indispensable duty to employ the most powerful arguments, and

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urge the most persuasive exhortations, to inspire our respective flocks with the love, and devote them to the practice, of prayer?

But if Religion itself be, in fact, nothing more than "an holy worship," which we offer unto God, to declare his blessings, and exalt his Majesty, or to solicit his assistance and obtain his mercy; if its several ordinances are prescribed to make of each of its professors a man of prayer; if, as hath been already observed, a Christian, who does not pray, is without God, without Religion, and without hope—what a monster must a Pastor be, a Minister of that blessed Religion, if he himself is not a man of prayer; if he does not know the use of it—that is to say, if he prays only with his mouth, without attention, without any sentiment of piety, and even with so little reverence, that his prayer is rather an insult offered to God, than the homage of Religion, paid to his Supreme Majesty? If, my Reverend Brethren, you do not feel this truth, how ought you, and how ought I myself to lament, in having to address such Ministers, and such Pastors, of the Church? In order then, to our mutual edification, and to animate us, individually, to the practice of a duty so consolatory in the discharge of our obligations, and so inseparable from them, I will beg your attention, whilst I expatiate on the necessity and advantages of frequent and devout prayer.

Yes, we who are Ministers, who are Pastors of

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the flock, we have need continually of the support of prayer. The greater our intercourse with the world, the more we are exposed to its allurements. When we appear in it, we ought to appear clothed with more virtue, more holiness, than the rest of those among whom we live. It is difficult to a Minister, if the practice of prayer have not established him stedfast and immoveable in goodness, to be incessantly in the midst of the corruption of the world, and not be caught in its snares. He carries thither an heart, void of those profound sentiments of religion, which the practice of prayer can alone inscribe upon it, and filled with all those ideas, which make the world seem amiable, and which, in our opinion, justify the abuse of it. And although decorum should restrain him within certain bounds, yet, if he is influenced only by a regard to men, and the decency of appearance, which his calling requires, the world no longer respects him as a Christian Minister, no longer perceives in him, the engaging piety, the holy dignity, which bespeak a Pastor of the flock.

But allowing that, in our intercourse with men, we are "defended from all adversity which may "happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts "which may assault and hurt the soul," and that a sense of the danger to which we are exposed, did not exact of us a constant application to God in prayer, which is, alone, capable of enabling us to support the dignity, and the holiness of the minis-

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try—is not our consecration to the sanctuary, a state entirely consecrated to prayer? We are the mediators between God and men—the public intercessors, either to turn away his wrath, which their sins perpetually provoke, or to suspend the scourge, and avert the calamities, which those sins prepare. They call for our ministry and our intercessions; they suppose us to have an interest with God, and access to him; but what interest, what access can we have, if the use of prayer have never united us to him? How shall we intercede for them, if we have not been accustomed to intercede for ourselves? How shall we be mediators between God and our flocks, if God knows us not; if the neglect of prayer has disqualified us from representing to him, the wants of his creatures—prayer, which possesses the power of softening his wrath, and, of moving him to compassion, at the very moment when his punishments are hanging over the souls entrusted to us?

Although, in the general course of Providence, and in the ordinary distribution of his grace, God attaches the salvation of the flock to unremitted vigilance in the Pastor: the blessing awaiting his labours, is dependant on his prayers. They are the means to be employed, to obtain for men those holy dispositions, which render the ordinances of the Gospel efficacious: not one of the functions which we exercise, ought to be performed without previous prayer, and a secret address to the Author and Source of all the gifts and graces,

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which the Minister distributes in his name. Does he administer the Sacrament of Baptism, at the font? He should supplicate the Almighty, that that child, being born again and made regenerate, should die unto sin, and live unto righteousness? Does he attend his flock to the Lord's Table, and distribute the sacred elements, representing the body and blood of their Redeemer; how ought his prayers to go up before God, that not one, by an unworthy receiving, may forfeit the efficacy of that heavenly Ordinance? Is he called to visit the sick, or attend the dying? Upon such affecting occasions, let him pour out his soul in the most fervent supplications, that he may disarm the severity of his awful Judge, in whose presence that soul may soon appear, and may prevail with the God of all mercy, to receive him into his heavenly habitations. Go through the several functions of the ministry, and see what good can be expected to result from them in the hands of a Minister, who does not accompany them with a spirit of prayer.

Having shewn the necessity, I now proceed to the advantages, arising from the practice of it.

Our calling subjects us to the danger of living habitually, in the transgression of many duties, we may consider as not essential, and of neglecting to have recourse to prayer—the only support which Religion offers—to awaken us from that stupefaction. Thus we become liable, either to profane

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holy things, or to use them in a way displeasing to God, who, by consequence, alienates from us his grace, and increases our weakness: for the conscientious observance of our several obligations, either strengthens our faith and piety, or aggravates our corruption and wretchedness.

In the second place, the pastoral duties, when we would discharge them with fidelity, are sometimes attended with trouble and vexation. Would we fulfil them with edification to our flock, and satisfaction to our Judge, our time must not be at our own disposal; the engagement into which we have entered, is sacred; it leaves us no longer our own, but dedicated to the service of our respective parishes. We labour, indeed, not infrequently for men insensible of our kindness: we, sometimes, excite the aversion, and provoke the hatred, of the very persons, for whose salvation, we are so solicitous. We then grow weary, seeing neither the end, nor the advantage, of our vocation; we no longer exert ourselves with the same zeal; self-love, not being encouraged by success, secretly insinuates, that fatiguing and useless cares never can be duties. Now, how can zeal withstand this suggestion, if we do not derive new powers from the frequent exercise of prayer; if we have not the consolation of committing our cares and sorrows, to the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, whose place we fill, and whose representatives we are? In his presence we shall be overwhelmed with shame, at reckoning upon light

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afflictions in the discharge of our duty; at comparing ourselves with those who yielded up their lives for his doctrine: in his presence we shall blush to be tempted to lay down our arms, before we have begun the combat; to be deterred and discouraged, in our perseverance in the holy warfare, by such easy exertions, whilst those righteous Ministers set at nought tribulations, hunger, thirst, persecutions, and all the fury of tyrants, which were designed to "separate them from the love of "Christ:" from his presence, we shall depart, with a greater delight in our ministerial calling, with an additional zeal for the salvation of our flocks. No! my Brethren, let us not deceive ourselves: without prayer, we feel all the disgust and chagrin attendant upon our sacred vocation; we bear a yoke which overpowers us: with prayer every thing is made easy; the yoke is no longer grievous; our labours increase, but the troubles accompanying them vanish. You, sometimes, complain of the weight, with which the difficulty of your situation oppresses you, and of your feebleness to sustain it: address yourself often to him, who changes our weakness into strength; continue instant in prayer; these difficulties will disappear; these mountains will be made plain; you will feel yourself a new man; and you will no longer complain of having too much to do, and too much to suffer, for "the furtherance of the Gospel."

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But if prayer, alone, can remove the troubles attached to our calling, it, alone, can likewise prevent the dangers to which we are exposed. It is but too true that the inward man, when we neglect the duty and the exercise of private prayer, insensibly becomes weak and feeble, even whilst we are engaged in our professional avocations. In directing our thoughts, and devoting our time, to the salvation of other men, we lose that secret and hidden life of faith, which is the vigour and the energy of piety. In expressing our solicitude for others, and never for ourselves, the powers of the soul wear out, and we "no longer delight ourselves in the Lord." In the eyes of men, we are holy and pious, but not so in the sight of God*. The Almighty, whose support we

* "A Christian Temper consists of various Parts: but the first Impression, which a genuine Faith in the Gospel makes on the Soul, and the ruling Principle, which it fixes there, is a deep Sense of Love to God and our Fellow-creatures, producing an earnest Desire that we and they may be for ever happy in his presence. Whoever, therefore, is destitute of this Feeling, ought not, though free from gross vice, to become a Clergyman; and without obtaining it from the Giver of all good Things by fervent prayer, no man is qualified to fill the place of one. For, notwithstanding that he may preserve some *Form of Godliness*, without which he would be mischievous and shocking in the highest degree, yet, not having the reality and *power thereof*, he must profess, and seemingly attempt, to make others what he is far from being himself. Consequently his endeavours out of the pulpit will be infrequent, reluctant, faint: and in it they will at best be unnatural and ungraceful, whatever pains he may take in his compositions, or whatever vehemence he may affect in his delivery.

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have not supplicated, leaves us to ourselves, and generally, humour, dissatisfaction, vanity, hold an higher place in the discharge of our several obligations, than a sense of duty, and a love of our brethren. From these rocks we can be preserved only by the exercise of prayer.

Another reflection, no less worthy your attention, is, that prayer is not merely indispensable to preserve us from those evils "which may assault and hurt the soul," but even to assure us of the advantage and usefulness of the duty. For it is by the practice, that we know the utility, of prayer. We plant, we water; but God alone giveth the increase; and how can we expect it, if we are not diligent to supplicate it of him? We do not invoke him, who alone can render our labours efficacious to our flock, and our solicitude acceptable to himself. The want of prayer is the principal cause of the little good the generality of Pastors do, in their parishes, notwithstanding they may exactly fulfill all the other duties of the ministry. They think they have performed their part well, when they have performed what is commanded, but by the small advantage ac-

Hence he will be dissatisfied within, detected and disesteemed by the judicious part of his hearers, and of little use to the rest, if he is not even hurtful by misleading them. Or whatever his case may be amongst men, his inward want of the piety, which he outwardly pretends to, must render him uncommonly guilty in the sight of God. Heaven forbid that I should have need to enlarge on such a character in this audience."—Abp. Secker.

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cruing from it, they might perceive that there is *a something wanting*; and so long as their prayers shall not interest the goodness of God, in the success of their labours; they will, like the apostles, pass their days and nights in casting the net, and in taking nothing; they will run a long and melancholy course, and will die without having brought one soul to Jesus Christ—without having reclaimed a single being from vice, or establised him in virtue and religion.

And indeed, what success can a Pastor, so little accustomed to prayer, promise himself from his instructions? What success can a Pastor promise himself in speaking *of* God, who never, almost, speaks *to* him? What barrenness in his discourses? He declares the truth, but it proceeds only from his mouth, and not from his heart. I appeal to yourselves; is it not true, that a holy Pastor, a man of prayer, with only moderate talents, does more good, leaves his auditors more affected with his discourses, than many others, who, with shining abilities, have not derived, from an intercourse with Heaven, that genuine piety, which can, alone, speak to the heart? A Minister, who does not habituate himself to devout prayer, may deliver an animated discourse, and substitute address and elocution for zeal and piety; but you will always see the man; you will perceive, that it is not a fire which descends from heaven. For what impressions can his instructions make, if unaccompanied with prayer to

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draw down upon them that grace, which alone can render them useful to those who hear him? He will speak only to the ears of his people, because the spirit of God, who alone knows how to speak to the heart, and who, through the neglect of prayer, not having taken up his abode within him, will not speak by his mouth. The Ministry of the word, will be a duty, not of choice, but of necessity; or he will make of it a theatre of vanity, where he will rather attract the notice, and obtain the applause of his hearers, than effect their amendment, and promote their salvation.

But although prayer were not so indispensable, as we are taught to believe it is, in order to accompany our labours with a blessing—is it not our bounden duty, to pour out our souls, in our closet in secret, for the salvation of those, for whom we must give an account? Are we not commanded, in the character we sustain, "to pray for "them without ceasing?" We are to lay before God their wants: we are to lament before him, over the vices in which we see them indulge themselves, and which our solicitude cannot prevent, nor our zeal correct, we are to supplicate strength for the weak, remorse for the hardened, and perseverance for the righteous. The more numerous their wants, the more ought our prayers, in their behalf, to be lively and fervent: when we appear before God, it should always be like the High Priest under the law, carrying, written upon our

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hearts, the names of the tribes, that is to say, the names of the people who are entrusted to us.

A Pastor, who does not pray, or who contents himself with reciting the prayers commanded by the Church, is not a representative of the good Shepherd: such an one is not, what he is required to be, a father—he is an hireling; the christians who are committed to his care, are not, as might be expected, his children—they are orphans; his heart, his bowels say nothing for them: he loves the title by which he presides over them; but he feels no comfort in the reflection, that he is to be the instrument of bringing them into a state of salvation, and of prevailing with them, to make their peace with God: he loves only the place of the shepherd; he has no affection for the flock: for, if he loved them, could he behold their irregularities, and the eternal evils they are bringing on themselves, without incessantly addressing himself to him, who alone can change their hearts, to the end that, not one of those whom the father has given to him in charge, should perish; What do I say? A Pastor, who does not pray for his people, not only does not love them; he refuses them that which is their due: depriving them of his prayers, he robs them of a resource, to which the goodness of God had attached the graces and assistance designed for his heritage; he refuses what his parishioners had a right to expect of him; he occupies the place of a godly Pastor, whose prayers might have drawn down upon them

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a thousand blessings, and he is accountable for all the sins which his prayers might have prevented. When you are disposed to complain of the negligences and irregularities of your parishioners, and of your being useless among them; examine yourselves, whether you are faithful in representing to "him that heareth prayer," their necessities and their miseries; whether you are solicitous, whether you are importunate, to obtain for them the protection and favour of the Almighty, who seems to have abandoned them: the prayers of a Pastor are seldom ineffectual; God, who has commanded us to pray for sinners, has also promised to hear us. We lament over the degeneracy of our flocks, whilst—the reflection ought to make us tremble!—it may be attributed almost solely to ourselves.

But how, it may be said, amidst a variety of avocations, which the care of a parish imposes, shall we find leisure to devote ourselves continually to prayer? Alas! among all our pretended cares and labours, how many hours pass unemployed! how many days given up to indolence, to amusements, little becoming, it may be, the gravity and the holiness of our ministry! how many moments in which idleness itself, is a trouble to us, and in which we are a burden to ourselves! Blessed God! a Minister, commanded to offer the supplications of his people, has not time to offer his own, and to pray for himself; a Dispenser of divine grace, indisposed to have any communication

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with him, who hath entrusted to him this glorious ministry, and in whose name he speaks and acts! a Minister of the Gospel, unwilling to give an account to the Almighty Being of the gifts and riches he is commanded to distribute, and of the use which the souls, whose salvation is entrusted to his superintendance, make of them!

But it is not, that we require your life to be passed in prayer.—No! it is rather a spirit of prayer, which is every where to accompany us: what is becoming us, as Pastors, is, to beseech of God, that spirit, which will direct us aright as Christians, and make us, as Ministers, instruments of salvation—to accustom ourselves to this secret and continual communication with God; to find him every where—to find ourselves every where with him—and to derive, from every thing, an opportunity of raising our minds to him. In this way, should a Minister be a man of prayer.

Heavenly Father, give, we beseech thee, unto thy Ministers, a tender and paternal heart, towards their several flocks: they will then know in what manner to address thy Divine Majesty in their behalf; they will then need no exhortations to animate them to call daily upon Thee, to "pour down upon them, the abundance of "Thy mercy." A Pastor, O my God, who refuses all heavenly intercourse, who neglecteth to interest Thy Providence, and supplicate thy Grace, in the protection and repentance of his

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flock, is not a Pastor and a Shepherd; he is a stranger, an usurper, and an intruder into a family, whose children neither awaken his solicitude, nor engage his tenderness. Gracious God, open thyself the eyes of the chief Shepherds; enlighten our Ministry, direct our choice, to the end that "we "may lay hands suddenly on no man," but may choose those only, whom thou thyself hast chosen: suffer us not, in order to promote any interest of our own, in order to confer a favour, or acknowledge an obligation, to contribute to the troubles and the disgrace of thy Church, by introducing into it Ministers, who may render it contemptible by their want of talents, or inefficacious by their want of piety. Speak unto us, O God, thyself, in secret, as thou formerly spakest unto Samuel— "Neither hath the Lord chosen this:" or rather, strike our hands, that they may become immoveable, when we are about to lay them on the head of a Minister, upon whom thy Holy Spirit hath not vouchsafed to rest.

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CHARGE XVI.

ON STUDY AND KNOWLEDGE.

Give attendance to reading.

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CHARGE XVI.

ON STUDY AND KNOWLEDGE.

IT cannot, certainly, require any proof that study is an indispensable duty, and knowledge an essential qualification in a Clergyman: it is obvious that the Church considers us as an order of men, set apart to prevent the infection of error, and to preserve the purity of truth.

Upon this subject, you, no doubt, my brethren, anticipate whatever arguments can be urged for the conviction of your minds, or whatever eloquence can be displayed for the persuasion of your affections; whatever obligation of our calling, may be proposed to your attention, nothing new can be expected.

Thus, you are already acquainted with every thing that can be said on the necessity of study, and of knowledge in a Clergyman; you are not ignorant that we are the light of the world, the eyes of the body of the Church, and that if they be darkness, the whole can be no other than darkness; that the Church, in the imposition of hands, has directed

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us—Go and teach ; that we are the pillars of the New Covenant, and that, being ordained for the purpose of instructing others out of it, we ought to be instructed ourselves ; in a word, that an uneducated Clergyman, has no right to bear the high title of the priesthood, and that he is no other than the disgrace of the Church, and the derision of the world.* This, my brethren, you know well already ; and these fundamental truths were impressed upon us, during our preparation for the work of the ministry : we were, at first, affected with them, but since that period, they, by becoming so familiar, appear to us less important : like those Priests and Levites, who bare the ark in the wilderness, " when

* " A point of great importance to Clergymen is, that they be studious. This will keep your money from being spent unwisely ; and likewise your time from being thrown away hurtfully or unprofitably, or hanging heavy on your hands. It will procure you reverence too, as persons of knowledge : whereas the idle will, even by the ignorant, be thought deficient. And, which is the main thing, this alone will enable you to understand the business of your station, and perform it well. But then you must apply to such things chiefly, as will fit you most to answer the great end of your employment ; and *determine*, with St. Paul, *to know nothing*, comparatively speaking, *amongst* your people, *save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* The concern of a Parish Minister is, to make the lowest of his congregation apprehend the doctrine of salvation by repentence, faith and obedience ; and to labour that when they know the way of life, they may walk in it. If he doth not these things for them, he doth nothing : and it requires much consideration to find out the proper methods of doing them, and much pains and patience to try one after another.—Abp. Secker.

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" the Lord went before them by day, in a pilllar " of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night, " in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by " day and night," the first appearance struck them for a while with an holy fear, with additional veneration for the commands of Moses, and for the duties of their state; every thing promised, on their part, a persevering fidelity; but perceiving every day that miraculous appearance, they considered it merely as an ordinary sight, and it made upon them, at last, no impression: reverence for Moses, zeal for the duties of the sacred office, grew weaker, and they were soon mingled with the murmurers and the worshippers of the molten calf, entirely degenerated from the holiness of their function.

This is a representation of our revolt, and especially of our dislike to study: we preserved, for a certain time, a sincere desire to advance in the knowledge indispensable to the right discharge of our duty; but indolence, dissipation, the example of many of our brethren, have insensibly cooled that first zeal: we thought that we knew enough; and our previous study, far from serving as a foundation of knowledge, to enable us to acquire all necessary subsequent information, has become extinct, and we have forgotten the little we had once learned. Would God, the experience of every day did not warrant the assertion! The priesthood is, for the most part, the fatal termination of study: we first endeavour to acquire sufficient know-

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ledge, to undergo the examination necessary to qualify us for holy orders. Are we invested with the sacerdotal character? we are delighted in having no account, in future, to give to men, of our ignorance, or our attainments; we reckon as nothing, the account we are to give before the tribunal of God, nor the dishonour of the Church, on whom we have imposed, by presenting ourselves candidates for the ministry; there we continue. Thus the sacred character becomes the sole and universal title, which authorizes ignorance and idleness: but it is then—that taking upon us the profession of the holy ministry—wisdom and knowledge, as we are constituted Pastors for the service of the Church, become more necessary: the sacred character does not confer learning: it supposes, that we are possessed of whatever is requisite: or rather, we enter into a new engagement to acquire it: but you lay down the arms of the holy warfare, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, at the very season the Church expects you to undertake the combat: whereas, the priesthood, which puts these holy arms into our hands, makes us unwilling to retain them—we have no more love for study—we no longer read—books are useless appendages—we are sometimes without any—and it is *not without a degree of surprise*, that we meet, in some of the houses of those Clergymen I am describing, with a single Bible.*

* What a description of the established Clergy of France! No wonder that a Church, thus supported, should fall. It was said of many of those who sought refuge in this country, that they were deplorably ignorant.

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It is not expected, that study should become your sole occupation, and that, devoted continually, to your books, you should lose sight of the wants of the souls committed to your care: it is solely to be useful to them, that you ought to acquire knowledge; it is to distribute among them, openly, the riches which you obtain in secret. So that when we exhort you to study, it is not to a study which renders you invisible to your parishioners; but which enhances the value of your presence, and renders your attentions more useful to them. In giving yourselves up to curious and speculative enquiries, which have no regard to their salvation, you would make a wrong application of that time, which is not your own, and which you owe to your flock: it is not required of you, to investigate the most abstruse subjects, and profound mysteries in theology: talents requisite for such investigations, are the portion of a chosen few, whom the Almighty from age to age, raises up, in order to oppose them to the enemies of the gospel, and to dispel, by their wisdom, the clouds, which the petulence of pride, and the subtilty of error, attempt to cast upon the purity of its heavenly doctrines. All are not prophets, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost are not communicated to all with the same splendour, and in the same abundance; but all ought to know the evidences, and understand the doctrines, of Christianity: we ought all to be acquainted with the nature, extent, and meaning of the evangelical precepts; to "meditate "upon them," as the Psalmist speaks, "day

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"and night;" to make them, after his example, our support, and "the very joy of our heart;" and to draw from the divine source of revelation, such remedies as may always be applied to the wants, and the various maladies, of the flock, which are entrusted to us.

The Scribes and Priests of the Law, persuaded that a knowledge of its precepts, and of its ordinances, was inseparable from the priesthood, displayed, with pompous ceremony, their phylacteries, which were no other than large rolls of the law, with which they bound the lower parts of their robes—"They make broad their philacteries, "and enlarge the borders of their garments." This, indeed, was a Pharisaical and ridiculous ostentation; it teaches us, however, that a Pastor should never, any where, appear without carrying with him the law, I do not mean, displayed on his garments, but deeply engraven on his mind, and on his heart. Even in the darkness of paganism, the "idol priests" had no other employment, than a diligent study of the fables and extravagances of their mythology. And we, my brethren, ordained for the purpose of informing ourselves clearly of the nature of a religion, in its origin divine, in its effects transcendent, commanded to contemplate, continually, this blessed revelation, "which hath brought life and immortality to light," feel no desire to be instructed in it, to read in it by day, to meditate on it by night: we regret the moments, in which we are, sometimes, obliged to consult it: we feel no shame at being igno-

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norant, not only of the most sublime and abstruse parts, but even those the most essential to the discharge of our ministry; we content ourselves with a slight and superficial knowledge: we do not, by any serious application, enter into the full and comprehensive meaning of the holy doctrine, of which we are the interpreters; how then, shall we engage those whose instruction is committed to our care, in the contemplation of it? Are now those to whom we preach, acquainted with the spirit of Christianity, and with the sincere and vital piety, which is to impress the hearts, and direct the steps, of its professors? Of the genius of the Gospel they know but little: of some of its ordinances, indeed, they are not altogether ignorant: but with the real nature of it, with its grand doctrines, with the obligations it imposes, with the consolations it affords, with the promises it holds out, they have no acquaintance: and how should they know its evidences, appreciate its doctrines, and apply its precepts, when the Pastors, whose duty it is to explain and enforce them, have never felt disposed to study them themselves?

But many of the Clergy, are, you say, possessed of such small revenues, that they are not in a situtation to purchase all the books necessary for the acquisition of such knowledge. Alas! did they love, and were they desirous of books, did they feel a real want of them, they would not find it so difficult to acquire them. And besides, are so many books requisite to acquaint a Clergyman,

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with the nature of his duty? It is not the number that is wanted: those that are indispensable are reduced to a few; the previous requisites are, a love of study; a desire of becoming useful to our parish; a conviction of the necessity of deriving from prayer that knowledge which study does not afford: of being impressed with a desire of salvation, and of applying all the means of advancing in evangelical wisdom, to inspire our flocks with a love of their duty, in order that they may, the more easily, be induced to practise it; in a word, it is a sincere desire to fulfil our ministry: but you might place the Pastors, of whom I am speaking, in the midst of all the books that have been written since the promulgation of the Gospel, and they would discover an aversion, rather than an anxiety, for the perusal of them.

But all men, you contend, are not born with certain talents, nor with a genius for learning. It is for this very reason, that you, who hold such language to us, ought to redouble your application, to the end that closer study and greater diligence, may supply the defects, and confer the excellences, which nature may have withheld. Besides, are such singular talents requisite to make yourselves thoroughly acquainted with the genius of that dispensation in which you have undertaken to instruct mankind? In a word, make amends by an holy life and active ministry, for the want of those talents by which others may be distinguished; your examples will compensate for what may be deficient in the ele-

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gance of your compositions, and the extent of your learning: was the servant who had received only one talent excused for the want of a right application of it? I repeat it, my brethren, are such transcendent qualities essential, in the opinion of the world, to the instructing of a simple people, and building them up in our most holy faith? We have only to love them, and feel an interest in their salvation; we have only to manifest for them the heart of a father, and a Pastor, concerned for their wants, and much more for their sins; we have only to offer up our frequent and fervent petitions, that the kingdom of God may extend its limits, and accomplish its purposes; and that the blood of Jesus Christ may not be shed in vain for the souls committed to our care. The Pastor possessed of these dispositions, is both learned and enlightened; and happy are the people, in having for their guide, a teacher so meek, so humble, so little qualified in appearance, but so filled with the Spirit of God! May it be the distinguishing character of the Church, to be blessed with such Ministers!

But, unhappily, among those Clergymen, who to justify their indolence, and excuse their ignorance, allege either the want of books, or their inherent indisposition to learning, as we find in their life neither application nor study, neither do we perceive a love of prayer, or any of those pastoral virtues, often more useful to the Church, more edifying than learning itself, which, not infrequently,

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puffeth up: ignorance, idleness, dissipation, and neglect of duty, generally go together. I am, indeed, unwilling to speak it, but do you speak for me, you who see it every day; what life do those Pastors, without any study, ignorant, idle, and dissipated in the midst of their parishes, generally lead? A life as low, as grovelling, and scarce less innocent, than that of the people over whom they preside: little anxious to make the field of the Gospel productive, which they suffer to lie uncultivated; the solicitude to improve their benefices, and to increase their incomes, constitutes their chief employment. When their indolence has not this resource, no book, no study engaging them at home, their habitation becomes insupportable. What a life for a Clergyman, who, in his parish, represents his master, as a dispenser of his holy Sacraments, and of his evangelical Graces?

Such is the inevitable consequence of the indulgence of idleness, and the neglect of study, in a Clergyman. Hence those* conferences, so wisely appointed by our predecessors, in this extensive diocese, so religiously observed throughout the kingdom; those holy assemblies, so calculated to maintain a sacerdotal union among the Ministers; a sacred harmony, in order to animate us, individually, to the uniform observance of the duties of the ministry of the Church, and a support, in order to

* Alluding to the retreat mentioned in Charge V.

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clear up, or remove the doubts, and obviate the difficulties of it: these conferences, which, at first, frequented with so much zeal, we have the mortification, at the termination of our episcopacy, to see deserted, and almost wholly done away in many deaneries, throughout this diocese. Whence can arise this desertion, so little edifying on your part, and so afflicting on ours? We need not hesitate to attribute it to its real cause: ignorance, indolence, and the neglect of study, are the principal reasons of this general absence; not capable, for the most part, of supporting, by their knowledge, these pious societies, and still less anxious to profit by the information of their brethren, they are ashamed to expose themselves: such men make a schism in the diocese, where the Almighty hath hitherto in his mercy, established peace, and preserved union; and bring upon themselves the curse denounced against those who "separate themselves, being "sensual, having not the Spirit."

I implore you, then, my reverend brethren, to obviate an evil, which represents you to yourselves, and to each other, in so unfavorable a light: restore to this great diocese, the high character which it has always sustained, by the universal observance of this salutary discipline: my course is already far advanced; suffer it not to end with the mortification of seeing a practice, productive of such substantial good, fall into entire disuse: spare my old age this sorrow; rather renew it with a fresh vigor, by renovating your zeal for your duty, more

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especially for the conferences, which are so wisely prescribed: "Fulfil ye my joy:" the love of study, will be renovated with them. Second, then, the wishes of a Pastor, who hath always loved you, who hath never exercised, but with regret, his authority over his Brethren, and who may, therefore, reasonably hope, that without having recourse to severity, his remonstrances will, of themselves, find the way to your hearts.

END OF THE CHARGES.

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As all my readers may not be possessed of that invaluable work, entitled THE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, by the learned Bishop of Lincoln, I shall add the catalogue of Books recommended by his Lordship to the Clergy.

"I shall subjoin," says this amiable and distinguished Prelate, "a List of Books, with their prices, which every Clergyman ought to possess; and it is greatly to be wished, that the purchase of them should be considered as a necessary part of the expences of the education of a person, designed for our holy profession. It will be remembered, that I am not describing the library of a learned divine, but of a respectable and useful Parish Priest."

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I beg leave to add, that the Clergy may, by consulting the London Catalogues, frequently meet with many of these books at not more than half the price here subjoined.

The following books, may, perhaps, by some be thought well adapted, either to inform the mind, refine the taste, or edify the heart:

Stackhouse's History of the Bible, 2 vol. folio
Lightfoot's Works, 2 vol. folio
Elements of Christian Theology, 2 vol. 8vo.
Bishop Porteus's Lectures on St. Matthew, 2 vol. 8vo.
Wall's Notes on the Old and New Testament, 3 vol. 8vo.
Wells on the Old and New Testament, 6 vol. 4to.
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Bossuet's Discourse on Universal History, English 8vo.
Sermons, Taylor's, (Jerem.) folio
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——— Hickman's, 2 vol. 8vo.
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——— Dr. Taylor's (Dr. Johnson's) 2 vol. 8vo.

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——— Leland's, Dr. John, 3 vol. 8vo.
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A

LETTER

ON

THE ART OF PREACHING.

TRANSLATED FROM M. REYBAZ.

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A

LETTER

ON

THE ART OF PREACHING.

BEING about to take upon yourself the office of a Preacher of the Gospel, you solicit my advice, which I consider as a proof, that you feel the difficulties attendant upon what you are going to perform. How many young Preachers do we see, who have received no previous instructions—and who have not, it may be presumed, considered instruction necessary—presenting themselves, with confidence before a public assembly! The modesty which characterizes you, is an omen of your success, and you deserve a more able guide, than my knowledge and abilities allow me to be.

As you have resolved to adopt the ecclesiastical vocation, you have, doubtless, made a previous investigation of your resources, and compared your several faculties, not with those of persons, whose lives have been devoted to their profession, but with those which the discharge of the duty requires.

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You have also, I trust, compared the importance of the work, with the powers of your mind; remembering, that you should not undertake any engagement without having first ascertained your capability to fulfil it.

Few vocations require such an union of talents, as that of a Minister of the Gospel. It calls forth every endowment of the mind, all the faculties of the soul, and the most attractive gracefulness of the body. Of these several powers, some are more essential than others; some are so indispensably necessary, that a young man is unpardonable, if he engage in this work of the Lord, without them.

If our studies have been well directed; if we have profited by application; and if we are ambitious to distinguish ourselves in our profession; it is quite sufficient to have been born with common abilities, to possess the qualities of mind requisite for a Preacher. A certain flow of ideas, and a perfect knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, is the effect of mature study. One view of a subject will discover what it principally contains, to form the basis of a discourse; and a knowledge of logic will teach you to make an happy decision, and just arrangement. There is not a man, devoted, in any degree, to his calling, who cannot, with care and labour, compose a Sermon, which, if not eloquent, will, at least, be useful and edifying.

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A knowledge of the human heart is just as necessary to a Preacher, as that of the Holy Scriptures. The human heart is a difficult book, and if we do not read, carefully, every page, we ought, at least, to study the principal chapters: it will prevent us from erring, by describing an imaginary, in the place of a real, being, and will supply us with that information, which will enable us to know, what is of all things the most difficult—ourselves.

For want of society, which is, in this respect, the best school for a Preacher, but which we cannot always frequent, he should study the most celebrated moralists: let him, above all, read that celebrated orator, Massillon, from whom nothing that concerned the human heart was concealed. I am not ashamed to recommend to his perusal. works of imagination, which are distinguished by purity of morals, and detail of character, designed at once, to interest the affections, and improve the understanding.

There is not a subject within the sphere of an orator, which does not demand a certain diversity of thoughts, the solution of which requires care, and exercises judgment, together with an order and method, in the arrangement of them. There is, moreover, a certain quality, valuable in itself, and indispensable to an orator, which animates and inspires all his discourses, and which displays its intuitive power more fully in some per-

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sons than others; this quality is inherent in the soul; it cannot be acquired by diligence: I describe it in one word—sensibility.

If an orator has not sensibility, he cannot attain the highest end of his labours, which is to affect the heart, whilst he informs the understanding. There is no emotion produced by eloquence, which does not spring from sensibility. It was that which inspired Fenelon, Bossuet, Flechier, Massillon, Saurin, the Abbe Poul, in some of their finest passages. He, who is so phlegmatic, as always to leave his hearers unaffected, is in want of an oratorical requisite, for which no learning can atone, and which no diligence will supply.

What then shall we say of those Preachers, who, far from transforming into sentiment, the abstract principles of morality, even speak in the language of metaphysics? Would an orator, endowed with sensibility, pursue so inefficacious a mean of edification? Be a philosopher; but in discourses from the pulpit, assume neither the tone, nor the language, of philosophy.

Sensibility, it is to be observed, has its degrees, and may increase by exercise. Thus, I would not prevent a man from becoming a Preacher, because he discovers no more than a spark of it, or because his attempt to introduce it into his discourses is feeble, and in consequence unsuccessful. It is sufficient

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to be not absolutely devoid of sensibility, provided we can, by the force of application, excite in ourselves a certain degree of energy. For that purpose, shun those exhibitions which harden the heart; frequent no spectacles which do not give soft impressions; let your time be employed in that course of reading, which inspires virtue, whose natural delineations affect the breast with gentle emotions, without rending it. When this power has taken possession of the heart, it will shew itself in your public discourses. You have then only to yield to its impressions; and when you come to deliver your subject from the pulpit, your enunciation, whilst it evinces your meaning, will communicate your portion of sensibility to your auditory.

In order that your Sermons may produce the effect intended by them, you must endeavour to rehearse them from memory. Have you then a memory adapted to that purpose? Can you, without occupying too much time, and giving too great diligence, learn your Sermon, so as to deliver it with ease, and repeat it without embarrassment? Memory is, like sensibility, strengthened by exercise. I know it. You cannot have finished your academical studies, without having frequently exerted your memery, and tried its power. You can, therefore, form, in this respect, a tolerably competent judgment of yourself.

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If your memory be treacherous, and you cannot depend upon it—how will you be distinguished in a profession, of which it is a principal requisite? If you attempt to repeat your Sermon, and do not perfectly recollect it, you occasion great distress to your audience: and how can you give that freedom to your utterance, and that action to your elocution, which are indispensable towards producing a high effect? If you hesitate, you deprive your delivery of the advantages it has over reading. In that case, rather read, than attempt to repeat; or, I would say, rather give up the pulpit for ever, where there is a barrier to your success, and which, if you have any attachment to your profession, or respect for yourself, will produce in you only uneasiness and mortification.*

But in vain do you possess an unruffled memory, if your audience lose any parts of your discourse, through the weakness of the organ which is to transmit it to them. A clear loud voice, which can, without straining or effort, be distinctly heard by a nu-

* To address the congregation, is the mode of speaking both the most pleasing and useful to the auditory, and at the same time, the most natural and satisfactory to the orator; by which, I mean, the directing his voice both to the right and left: to be able to do this oratorically, he must know his Sermon thoroughly, and by glancing his eye upon it, as he turns his head from one side to the other—for there should be scarce any motion of his person—he will have the appearance of repeating, whilst he possesses the advantage of frequent recourse to his manuscript.

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merous assembly, is a happy and an invaluable quality in an orator. A powerful voice commands the attention, and prevents the distraction of mind, which is, alas ! too prevalent in the best disposed congregations. It is not only requisite, that every individual should, without being eagerly intent, and throughout every part of the Church, hear the Preacher; but it is also requisite, that it should be impossible not to hear him; and that the sound should be clear and full, even when he is giving the utmost melody to his periods.

It is not always that a voice is of sufficient extent, and it is not always that a public speaker is an orator. It has happened to me, more than once, to have been present at a Sermon, and not to have heard it: many others were in the same predicament. What signified it, therefore, whether the Sermon was good or bad? The Preacher may, under shelter of one defect, conceal many.

Monotony is one of the natural and unhappy attendants upon a feeble enunciation. The orator, possessing only a small compass of voice, cannot vary his cadence. It is still worse if he make any efforts to be heard: he then does not speak; he only squeaks; his voice becomes unnatural; he has only one tone, and it offends the ear.

Exercise, it is said, strengthens the voice, gives it power and extent; this is true, when the weak-

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ness is in the organ only; when the voice wants merely to be exerted, and to have a more ample range. But if this defect, as it often happens, arises from the lungs, it cannot be overcome, except at the risque of one's health, or, it may be, of life.

The chief means of remedying the weakness of the organs, is to articulate very distinctly. Clearness of pronunciation will contribute to make you heard more than the greatest exertion of voice; the syllables should, in succession, strike the ear, and this should be the object of unceasing attention. You will form a very erroneous judgment, if you take the tone of familiar conversation as a rule for a public discourse. In the one case, you speak, if I may be allowed the expression, to the ear of your hearer, and nothing escapes him: in the other, the word has to find his ear—to reach him at the extremities of a large building; feeble sounds never arrive there; and if even the pronunciation is not unusually distinct, nothing is heard in the remote parts of the Church, but sounds which are altogether inarticulate.

Clearness of pronunciation is, to the ear, what clearness of perception is to the mind; we must express ourselves without embarrassment, to be heard; and we may apply to the delivery of a discourse, what Quintilian said of the discourse itself: *Prima virtus orationis perspicuitas.*

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I suppose, then, you possess those elemental qualities, I have briefly mentioned, and which constitute the very first principles of elocution; you are now about to commence your vocation.

Do you know, my friend, how to read? This question may astonish you; but you may have read a great deal, without knowing how to read. —There are some Preachers, who, arrived at old age, have read all their life, and who are, themselves, the evidences, that good reading is very rare.

To read, is not to collect letters, and syllables; it is not to pronounce words and sentences: it is to express the sense of these sentences; it is to represent the thoughts of a discourse, in their appropriate colours. It is to blend the different passages, in such a manner as not to injure each other; but, on the contrary, to give to each mutual strength and assistance. It is to distinguish, by the accent, what is only argumentative, from what is pathetic and oratorical; it is to discern any important end in a sentence, in order to detach it from the rest, and express it without affectation, and without the appearance of design; it is to convey the idea, rather than the expressions, the sentiments, rather than the words; it is to follow the impulse of the discourse, in such a manner, that the delivery may be quick or slow, mild or impetuous, according to the emotions it should excite.

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To read, is to express, by variations of voice, the comforts arising from the consciousness of innocence, and the horrors, from the instigations of vice; the warmth of zeal, and coolness of indifference; indignation, fear, pity, and benevolence; the blessings and chastisements of God; the pride and misery of man; the supplications to the Supreme Being, and the pathetic exhortations to sinful men. In short, to read, is to distinguish our several thoughts and sentiments, by inflections of voice, which should, at once, describe their meaning, and impress their power.

When you have got the better, if it be possible, of all provincial accent, and your pronunciation is pure and correct; when you have accustomed yourself to read aloud, with feeling, and varying your tones, in such a way, that what you read, may be well understood; then, progressively, raise your voice, three or four notes higher than the common tone: and do not appear in the pulpit, until you have many times repeated this useful experiment.

Timidity, when its influence is greatly predominant, disconcerts; it prevents the exertion of talent. On the other hand, presumptuous confidences prejudices an auditory against the speaker, who should, by all means, preposses their goodwill. Keep then, a wise mean. Appear, at least, to entertain a very modest opinion of yourself, which has always the effect of disarming criticism,

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and conciliating the esteem of a congregation. I have seen Preachers, who, to practice a little deceit on themselves, and thereby shun the distractions which their timidity might occasion, fix their eyes on a pillar of the church*, and address their discourse, exclusively, to it. This mode of speaking is not judicious. The Preacher loses by it all the warmth of his zeal, and destroys the effect of the expression of countenance. It is the assembly he ought to look in the face. To them he proposes his questions; to them he addresses the reasoning of his propositions, the gentleness of his reproofs, and the earnestness of his exhortations. It is the assembly which animates the orator, which inspires him with suitable tones, and with a pleasing cadence. How, without looking continually around him, can he perceive, whether the attention of his congregation is supported, or relaxed? And how can he again attract it, when it has been suffered to escape, but by redoubled zeal, and a more impassioned address?

Scarcely has the Preacher opened his mouth than a religious fascination inspires the audience. He is no longer an ordinary person. He is an heavenly ambassador, invested with divine autho-

* When a Clergyman preaches in a Church, with which he is not at all acquainted, to direct his voice, at the beginning of his sermon, to a distant object, *is not injudicious*. Dr. Hinchliffe, the late bishop of Peterborough, always did so, and he was, during his life, considered one of the best preachers in the Church of England.

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rity: his language, his accents, assume a more grave and solemn character than those of a mere man. Happy, if nothing throughout the discourse happen to dissipate the illusion, and divert the attention of the auditory!

You comprehend, that it is not necessary, in the exordium of your discourse, to give yourself up to declamation. If you except these cases when the Preacher seems overcome with a thought which prepossesses him; when he communicates to his auditory, a powerful impulse, the effect of his preceding meditations; except, I say, these cases, which are rare, you should enter on your discourse with composure, elegance, and simplicity.

We see Preachers who seem to be exhausted with their exordium. They elevate their voice to the highest pitch at the very commencement. Did that exordium constitute the whole of the Sermon, they would not be reprehensible; but it is only an introduction; and when they come to the main point of the subject, they are not able to support the power with which they set out; and their discourse appears like a monster, with a large head and a meagre body.

Let the mildness of your exordium prescribe to you the proper tone in which it requires to be delivered. Your guarded gesture should correpond with it, and all action should be restrained. An ex-

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ordium, indeed, is not always necessary; sometimes a preacher enters on the subject without a previous introduction.

I do not hesitate to prefer, in a Sermon, divisions formally announced, to those which are only intimated by transitions, in the arrangement of the discourse. This last method, is doubtless, the most oratorical, but, certainly, not the best adapted to assist the memory of those who pay little attention.

In printed discourses I prefer divisions, rather implied than expressed, where the reader can review the plan which the author has traced.—Whereas, in a discourse, which is to be delivered, clear divisions are necessary, for the sake of remembering what has been spoken. It is the handle of a vase, in the taking hold of which, every thing it contains, goes with it; but if it has no handle, and is out of our reach, its contents are lost to us.

After having fixed the attention of your audience on the plan you propose to follow, you then fully open your discourse, and pass, by means of transition, from one point to another.

It is by incorporating argument and eloquence, doctrine and exhortation, precept and address, that you are enabled to vary your delivery; if, at least,

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your mode of speaking corresponds to your plan of composition.

Most of the French Catholic Preachers are full of fire; but as they begin they conclude; the whole discourse is a constant peroration.* Let me not be mistaken;—a tone always exalted; a severe system of morality; singularity of sentiment, and extravagance of hyperbole, are only the characters of vehemence, and by no means denote the excellence of the Preacher. I would rather un-do, than over-do, the thing: what does not attain the proposed end, is but feeble; what exceeds it, is ridiculous.

There are some cases in the delivery, where the manner of speaking depends entirely on the *preceding* parts. After, for instance, some very vehement passages, the more tranquil should gradually abate of their force; the waves of an agitated sea do not calm immediately, although the wind ceases.

Would you be, indeed, distinguished—be simply elegant, and uniformly proper—be calm, in general, in order to be vehement, when the juncture shall arrive. Reserve your oratorical powers for the con-

* Notwithstanding this censure passed upon the Catholic Preachers, sure I am, that their Sermons, if judiciously abridged, and adapted to an English Protestant congregation, would produce the highest effects. The Preacher, who would thus prepare them, would, I doubt not, have an auditory, both encreasing in numbers, and improving in morals.

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clusion of your discourse, when you apply more particularly to your audience, the general truths which you have been propounding.

In avoiding monotony, that is, a tone uniformly the same, be careful not to fall into what is called a whine or cant, which is still more insupportable than monotony itself. This whine or cant, consists in the use of two or three tones, which return in the same order, and terminate by the same fall; the Preacher acquires these bad habits, when the weakness of his voice forbids the variety of necessary tones, or when habit takes the place of sense and of earnestness. This fault is intolerable to an audience, and not infrequently, renders preaching useless.

I much wish, that young Preachers would not neglect any means of forming their voice, and improving their ear. Some knowledge of vocal music* would be very useful to them; the practice of it would acquaint them with many secrets.

What I remark on the voice, may, in many respects, be said of action. It ought to be just, expressive, simple, and at the same time varied. But

* I once heard the following remark made by a Clergyman, who is an ornament to his profession, and it is consonant to general observation :—" The recommendation of vocal music seems equivocal, and is not founded on experience, since I have known the finest singers and players unable to read well, and on the contrary, excellent readers make very bad singers."

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what gives expression to action? What are its defects and qualities? Are there any rules to follow concerning it? We have no fixed model to consult, as we have on written eloquence. We must collect transient observations, and determine between disputed principles.

Action is indispensably necessary in the art of oratory; it is dictated by feeling, emotion, and zeal, and is not always regulated without difficulty. Observe the drawings of great painters, in their representation of the action which they give to persons. Junius, in his treatise on the painting of the ancients, says, that the hands assist the words, that they can demand, promise, call, detest, interrogate, refuse, and declare the different affections of the soul. Action is the means by which the dumb make themselves understood: by it they express all their sentiments, and convey all their thoughts.

Gesture is very common and familiar to persons who are quick and lively; it is less so with sedate and quiet people. The Italians use much gesticulation when they speak; it is not the case with the inhabitants of the more northern countries. In France, where exterior appearance is so much studied, good taste suppresses all gesture; the women, especially, who pass for the most accomplished, absolutely renounce it, finding, no doubt, that it is much easier to abstain from, than to regulate it. Their conversation would, in consequence,

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appear uninteresting, did they not supply the place of action, by a cadence in their speech, and an ease in their deportment.

An orator, without action, would deprive himself of one great means of persuasion and effect; his eloquence would be unaffecting, and would be destitute both of its charms and power.

Gesture should not approach to pantomime. Too much repeated, and too vehement, it fatigues the eyes, and loses its excellence.

If any profound sentiment affect you; if you speak of any thing which inspires you with reverence, as God, His Providence, and adorable Perfections, gesture is then, altogether, unseasonable; more especially, if you introduce the Divinity as speaking unto man, let a perfect composure have place throughout your whole frame; as gesture and action could give neither power to your language, nor dignity to your sentiments.

If you have any principle to establish, any feeling to describe, call in action to your assistance; but let it be grave and chaste, and not intemperate and ludicrous. The violent motion of the hands is not less offensive, than the babbling of the tongue; there is a dignity peculiar to the pulpit, which is violated by unseemly action.

Action should be free and unrestrained. It

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should proceed from the shoulders; that which arises from the elbow, and, more especially, from the hands, is not sufficiently dignified. When your period is finished, let your action cease: and do not use a variety of gestures to express one idea.

The two arms, only, can contribute to action: Be careful, when you use them together, that their motions correspond. Their want of concord would be as offensive to the eye, as harshness of sound is grating to the ear.

In general, when one hand only is used, the right should be preferred. Not that it has any advantage over the left; but whether it is that a public speaker is more accustomed to use it, or that the eye is more habituated to the use of it, the action of the left hand seldom appears graceful.

Some writers on oratory have endeavored to prescribe bounds to the height the action of the hand should be carried: do not, it has been said by some let it pass the head; by others, let your passions direct you; and if they impel you to raise your hands above your head, they will produce no bad effect. It is, then, nature which dictates it. Nature, alone, should limit you in your animating exclamations; and in an ardent invocation, and in a transport of admiration, nature, alone, should be your guide.

But let your action be always just; there are some men, in whom it is, unfortunately, always false.

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Having neither judgment nor ear, their action is never what it should be.

Should this, unhappily, be your case, discard action altogether. It is much better to deprive yourself of its advantages, were it even unexceptionable, than to make it either embarrass your periods, or give them a contrary meaning. Just action, and a correct judgment, usually go together. Nature seldom allows the perfection of one, with the absence of the other.

The action which would attempt to express words, of which a sentence is composed, would evidently fail in its effect. It would be as offensive as trifling; it is the general meaning, and predominant idea which should be conveyed. But how is this to be accomplished? It cannot be taught. Judgment, taste, and above all, good models will illustrate it.

To vary the gesture is a talent, and this talent leads to correctness; for, if the turn of a discourse varies considerably, the action in order to express it, ought to vary likewise. When a Preacher has only one gesture, it will, necessarily, be incorrect or insignificant: notwithstanding which, a dull uniformity of action is the common defect of Preachers. The whole eloquence of the person, at least, with many Preachers, consists in spreading their hands, for the purpose of uniting them with a

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loud noise*, and in continually repeating this periodical motion. Thus they make the auditor the victim of their unskilfulness; they torment his eyes, and wound his ears, without mercy, by means injudiciously designed to attach and please them.

The arms and hands are not the only instruments of action; the whole person ought to concur in it. The positions of the body should vary, sometimes by turning to the right †, and sometimes to the left. I have often regretted, that our pulpits‡ were not, as in many places in Italy, formed like a tribune, where the Preacher could move at liberty.

Expression of countenance, the fire and energy of the looks, add greatly to the manner of delivery; the turn of the eyes is a species of action, which gives life to eloquence.

These various talents are only means to add efficacy to the action of the Preacher. To action, all

* This censure equally applies to the Methodists, Calvinists, Independents, &c.

† In small Churches no inconvenience may arise from following these directions, but in a large building, where the pulpit is central, whilst the person of the Preacher is turned towards one half the congregation, the other is generally prevented from hearing.

‡ Many of the English pulpits are, it is true, sufficiently awkward: but such as M. Reybaz proposes, would only tend to make the speaker theatrical, and would totally destroy the solemnity of the preaching.

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the observations I have made, exclusively relate. It is the vehicle of thoughts and feelings, with which a Minister can more sensibly affect his audience. To say that a preacher has just and appropriate action, is to say, he possesses, in an eminent degree, all the exterior qualities of an orator, in alliance with the liveliness which gives to these qualities their power, and determines their effects.

Demosthenes being asked, in what eloquence consisted, centered the whole in action; and repeated the same word three time, as if he had said, it included every thing, and that eloquence could not exist, independent of it. I contrast action with the coolness of those orators, little deserving of the name, with those Ministers of habit, who do not, themselves, feel the truths of which they are commissioned to make others sensible; or, who are absolutely indifferent to the religion which they preach, and the effect it is intended to produce.

I do not hesitate to pronounce, however influenced we may be by custom, that the effect of eloquence is astonishing. Compose an indifferent discourse, and repeat it perfectly, you will satisfy your audience much more, than with an excellent sermon, delivered with disgusting monotony, or lifeless utterance.

How many times have we been delighted with the delivery of a composition, the perusal of which we

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could not endure? And, on the contrary, how often has a work, which pleased us in the reading appeared otherwise when spoken? what inference shall we draw from this? That elocution is an important art; and that a Preacher cannot apply himself to it too attentively; not for the purpose of giving effect to a bad discourse, but to exhibit with all its advantages, a sermon, convincing by its argument, and efficacious by its persuasion.

You will find, in the History of Eloquence, that the orator owes his success, principally, to declamation. The harangues of Pericles, produced, in his mouth, the highest effect. He published them; but Quintilian esteemed them unworthy of the reputation they had acquired. The Minister Du Bosc was deputed by the Protestant Clergy to address to Louis XIV. their remonstrances. I have just heard, said that Prince, the finest Preacher in my kingdom. The extreme feebleness of the Sermons published by Du Bosc, strongly prepossess us in favour of his exterior eloquence.

There are three* sorts of declamation; that of the Pulpit, of the Theatre, and of the Bar. But as each has a species of eloquence peculiar to itself, so it hath of declamation likewise. Whatever it is that a person repeats, he should always consider

* M. Reybaz knew nothing of the Eloquence of the British Parliament, which surpasses often the eloquence of the Pulpit, even in Franch.

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who it is that speaks—who are the people addressed—what ought to be the subject matter of the discourse—and under what circumstances the auditory is convened. These considerations regulate the art of speaking.

The Preacher commonly speaks to instruct the assembly; he is transported with the emotions he endeavours to excite. If he feel sensibly, if he be sometimes moved to tears, he has always in view the welfare of his audience: the declamation of the Preacher will be influenced by that single motive; the whole tenor of his action will be to persuade the affections, and to impress the heart.

One successful method of an orator's conciliating the esteem of his audience is, by the observance of oratorical decorum. It is not becoming in a young Preacher to censure old age with severity; it is not becoming in him to be austere in his system of morality, to declaim against permitted pleasures, and not to allow any thing to human weakness. It is not becoming in him whose situation in life is obscure, to inveigh loudly against riches, nor to censure, indiscriminately, the application of them, as he will only subject himself to the suspicion of envy. He must take care, at the Festivals of the Church, and on days set apart, by authority, for solemn worship, not to preach on moral subjects which have been often discussed, since they will not be esteemed judicious and appropriate.

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Be attentive to what your age, your rank in the Church, your condition in society, the times, places, and persons prescribe to you to say, and you will preserve decorum. Religion does not discard, but enjoins it; Religion recommends prudence, which suggests the greatest caution in not wounding, unnecessarily, the feelings of others. The Essay of the Abbe Mallet, on oratorical decorum, is worthy of your serious perusal.

There are many works on preaching: the æra of Louis XIV produced many, and the seventeenth century has produced more. Much as may, confessedly, be gained by the study of Treatises on Oratory, if your object be to arrive at celebrity, as a Preacher, still, a great genius is far superior to their instructions. They will teach you to shun the defects of the art; but will they inspire you with its beauties? There exists a natural relation between the mode of speaking, and of what we speak. I have never heard an eloquent composition delivered, by the Author, in an ungraceful and uninteresting manner.

The substance of all the rules I have laid down is this, that a Preacher ought not merely to *seem*, but actually TO BE impressed with the truths he delivers. Let a truly religious disposition prevail throughout your discourse. Let not your preaching be such as will be flattering to yourself, but adapted to the improvement and edification of your audience. The perfection of eloquence, in a

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Christian orator, consists in forgetting himself; the importance of what he is delivering, and the effect it ought to produce, should suppress all consciousness of his own talents.

Above all, let your morals be correspondent to your doctrine. Let your appearance excite the ideas of wisdom, integrity, and piety. By your virtues, attract the respect and confidence of mankind, that every heart may be disposed to profit by your instructions. Justify, by your example, the definition which Quintilian gave of an orator, when he said—the upright is the eloquent man.

You asked me for instruction in the Art of Preaching, persuaded they would be useful to you. If I have been fortunate enough to answer your expectations, answer mine in return. May you make an happy application of the principles I have laid down. May your ministry flourish, and be productive of the most blessed effects! May you, by the successful cultivation of the Lord's vineyard, receive, as the reward of your labors, not the admiration and the praises, but the blessings, of those you have instructed, consoled, and nourished, with the words of life!

REYBAZ.

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THOUGHTS

ON THE

COMPOSITION OF A SERMON,

AS ADAPTED TO

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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THOUGHTS

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SO many are the Treatises on the Composition of a Sermon, produced by the wisdom of the learned, and the zeal of the pious, that to attempt to add to their arguments, or to illustrate their positions, may subject me to the imputation of overweening vanity, and intolerable arrogance. But by such motives, I can solemnly assure my readers, I am not, in the remotest degree, actuated. Some observations contained in this Essay may perhaps, be useful to those who have not an opportunity of consulting the elaborate and philosophical writings, which accurately examine, and clearly explains the several parts of which a Sermon is composed; my intention being merely to submit a few observations, to the young and inexperienced, and make, at the same time, such reflections, as may, if duly considered, tend to introduce among such, whose mode of writing and speaking is not unalterably

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fixed, some improvement in the art of public preaching in the Established Church.

Whoever sits down to write a Sermon should first examine, whether he is possessed of the various requisites, which will enable him to produce a composition, creditable to himself, and advantageous to his hearers? Has he a thorough knowledge of the Sacred Writings? Is he able to apply them with exact judgment, and uninterrupted facility, in the support of an evangelical truth, and in the extirpation of a pernicious error? And are they so familiar to him, that he can *, by incorporating their language with his own, give vigour to his thoughts, and ornament to his style; convey information to the mind, delight to the imagination, and piety to the heart? Can he, by a diligent study of the best writers in divinity, adduce the strongest arguments, and combine the clearest ideas, which the nature of the subject requires? I speak not of taste, philosophy, logic, philology, and classical learning—with each of which, I suppose him to have become, to a certain extent, acquainted in the University. I speak not of a knowledge of the human heart, it being a book, which a young man cannot, in general, have very diligently inspected.

* The admirable Sermons of Archbishop Secker, are, in this respect, the very best models: it is peculiar to that distinguished Prelate, to express his thoughts in the beautiful language of the Sacred Writings.

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If he be possessed of talent which enables him to compose, he will next consider, what is the design of a Sermon? It is to illustrate God's Book, and to persuade the assembly, to whom the composition is to be addressed, to become God's people: it is to combat with power, and eradicate with effect, the prevalence of open, and the propensity to secret, sins. The undertaking is bold, the task difficult, the success uncertain. The Preacher, therefore, not only previous to the entering on his labor, but throughout every part of it, should beseech the Almighty to endow him with a spirit, to think only what he can approve. For, becoming as we do, in a more especial manner when we compose public discourses, "laborers with God;" employing ourselves, professedly, when we illustrate evangelical truth, in the more immediate service of our Master, we can scarce expect to be accounted worthy to promote his glory, which should be our sovereign aim, if we neglect to supplicate by fervent prayer, the direction and assistance which are graciously promised, and individually given, to all diligent and faithful dispensers of the heavenly word. "Form yourselves thoroughly," says Archbishop Secker, "by devout meditations, and fervent prayer, to seriousness of heart, and zeal for the eternal welfare of souls: for then every thing else, that you are to do, will follow of course. Every sentence we write, and

The reader will probably be gratified by seeing the several observations contained in this volume, supported by the authority of the venerable Secker.

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every thought we conceive, should be with this impression on our souls, that we are appointed the ambassadors of him, whom "the Lord anointed "to preach good tidings." In the various arguments therefore, which we urge, and the several addresses which we make, the end of both should be to "bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the "prison to them that are bound." I mention, particularly, the habitually pious * disposition, and uniformly devout frame of mind, in which a Sermon should be composed; because, from many of those discourses which we both read in print, and hear from the pulpit, we may, without censure or uncharitableness, conclude, that their authors have scarce a sense of the blessings of redemption on their hearts: on which account, they are, it may be presumed, delivered without feeling, heard without interest, and read without effect. Religion and piety must be inscribed, in indelible characters on the

* "A fervent desire of being useful, will teach you more than any particular directions can upon every head. Without this desire, you will either be negligent; or if you would seem zealous, you will be detected for want of uniformity and perseverance. Therefore make sure first that all be right within, and *out of the good treasure of the heart, you will bring forth good things*, naturally and prudently, and through the Grace of the Holy Spirit, effectually. It is not easy inded even to instruct the willing; much less to convince the unwilling, and reform the wicked. But still these are the purposes for which we are God's Ambassadors."—Abp. SECKER.

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mind and soul of a composer, who aspires to become, as a Preacher of the Gospel, an instrument, in the hands of Providence, of "turning many to "righteousness." Living under such influence, he prepares a discourse to be addressed to an assembly of fallen creatures, alienated from God and Religion, for whose redemption the blood of the Son of God was shed, and to whom is offered a covenant of mercy, very generally, either egregiously misunderstood, stupidly disregarded, or wilfully transgressed. Instead of producing an abstract philosophical essay, or a metaphysical disquisition, difficult to the writer to express, and, in consequence, to the hearer to comprehend, he cheerfully sacrifices all parade of learning, and ostentation of knowledge, and confines himself to the elucidation of the * Evangelical Covenant. The congregation he is to address, he esteems as his children. "He has them, therefore, in his "heart;" and the expressions of his desire for their welfare, and of his zeal for their happiness, are manifested, in his solicitude to reclaim them from the seductions of negligence, to withdraw

* "Though the Science of Morals and natural Religion is highly to be valued, yet the Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel require your principal Regard beyond all Comparison. It is of the Gospel that you are Ministers: all other Learning will leave you essentially unqualified; and this alone comprehends every Thing that is necessary. Without it, you will never *approve yourselves to God, as Workmen that need not to be ashamed*, nor make your Hearers *wise unto Salvation*."—Abp. SECKER.

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them from the paths of error, and to deliver them from the punishment of sin.

Such is the design of a Sermon. Whereas judging from the generality of English discourses, the object of one writer, seems to be to display his talent of reasoning, of another, his accuracy of expression; of a third, his knowledge of Theology; but to give men a comprehensive idea of the Gospel Covenant—to persuade them to bear in mind, in their whole behaviour, the relation in which they stand to their Redeemer and Judge—to consider themselves as the Temple of God, in whom the Almighty, by his Spirit, vouchsafes to dwell—appears to be only a secondary part of their design. Be our attachment to our excellent establishment ever so great, we are compelled to acknowledge, that the Sermons * usually preached and published, are not so animated in their style,

* "I have," says a popular writer, "attempted to show, that however many of those (Sermons) may be esteemed beautiful moral Essays, they are devoid of that evangelic and pastoral *unction*, which the pulpit demands: that they are not calculated to reach the affections, nor, in correspondence with the object in view, either to disturb, terrify, soften, encourage, or console. They contain no communicative sensibility, and have nothing that is glowing, seraphic, or incentive. If any authority were requisite to corroborate my opinion on this subject, I find the sentiments of Bishop Warburton in perfect consonance with mine: in his Directions for the Study of Theology, he has these words:—"A pathetic address to the passions and affections of penitent hearers, perhaps the most operative of all the various species of instruction, is that in which

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and vehement in their manner, as the frequent contemplation of the happiness of heaven, or the torments of hell, awaiting every hearer of them, might be expected to produce:—the defection from the Church in many, and the unpardonable neglect of her ordinances, accompanied with the total absence of vital religion, in more, of her professed adherents, are, I fear, incontrovertible evidences of the truth of the assertion. Of printed Sermons, I could mention many volumes, very creditable to the several authors, as specimens of didactic composition—the arguments well selected, the arrangements happily made, the language elegantly expressed—but this is all. Does the Preacher, in every page, exhibit solicitude for the glory of the Master whose credentials he bears? Does he demonstrate an evangelical zeal for the everlasting welfare of his fellow-creatures, committed to his charge, applying that solicitude, and directing that zeal to every faculty of their mind, and every passion of their heart, to convince them of the necessity of living in favor with the Almighty—of considering themselves as accountable to his justice—and therefore, impressing the duty he himself feels, as one commissioned to announce truths, in themselves inexpressibly awful, and in their consequences, infinitely important? Go into a conventicle. You hear the preacher

the English pulpit is most defective."—See an Essay on the Eloquence of the pulpit in England, prefixed to the translation of Select Sermons, from Bossuet, by Mr. Jerningham.

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conjuring and imploring the assembly, in the most urgent and affectionate manner, to avoid the punishment denounced against sin, and embrace the happiness promised to religion. The scenes of future misery, which he delineates, affect the senses, and melt the hearts, of his admiring auditors: in his descriptions, his exhortations, his appeals, his denunciations, he artfully interweaves his own solicitude—the pungent misery he feels and the alarming apprehensions he entertains, about their salvation. When an ignorant person hears such declarations—when he perceives the Peacher so benevolently interested in his behalf—when the voice, the manner, the language of the speaker, all concur to shew him a danger which he never saw before; when he contrasts the imposing warmth of the conventicle—where every sentence is adapted to his understanding, and addressed to his feelings—with the frigid caution of the Church, which he has attended, it may be, all his life, without being once awakened from the security of sin, and terrified with the anticipation of punishment—can it be any wonder, that the Church should, under such circumstances, yield to the conventicle, and that error should triumph over truth?

It will here, I doubt not, occur to every one, that the subjects which are proposed to the attention of our congregations, are not always the most interesting; the Scriptures supply many, seldom introduced into the pulpit, yet are very important in

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themselves, and would be rendered extremely affecting to the auditory, by the exercise of judgment, and the display of zeal, by which some of the Clergy are pre-eminently distinguished. Common topics are too generally enforced; by which means little * attention is given to public discourses, and a lamentable ignorance pervades the hearers. I shall not be understood to signify, that texts should be chosen for their singularity. I am supposing, that when a Preacher chooses a subject, he consults his judgment, and considers what is best adapted to "bind up the broken-hearted, "and to give deliverance to the captives, sold "under sin." Impressed by such a sense of duty, we need not be apprehensive that he will be directed by an offensive and ridiculous singularity of choice.

* "Coming to Church the Bulk of Mankind even still consider as a † Duty; but hearing as they ought, they partly neglect, and partly experience to be difficult. Therefore we must not only admonish, but assist them. For this End, we must shew them from first to last, that we are not merely saying good Things in their Presence, but directing what we say to them personally, as a Matter which concerns them beyond Expression. More general Discourses they often want Skill to take home to themselves; and oftener yet Inclination; so they sit all the while stupidly regardless of what is delivered. Therefore we must interest them in it, by calling upon them to observe, by asking them Questions to answer silently in their own Minds, by every prudent Incitement to follow us closely.—Abp. SECKER.

† A very alarming and a very awful change has taken place, both in religious sentiments and public morals, since the worthy Archbishop composed this excellent Charge.

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'I have not, I must repeat, proposed to myself, to write an abstract discourse on the Composition of a Sermon, but merely to consider the subject as it relates to the Church of England. For which reason I purposely decline laying down * rules for the exordium, the argumentative, and pathetic parts, and the peroration of a sermon.

I shall, however, remark, that the introduction of a Sermon, should be, in general, mild, and conciliating; that it should contain nothing that will offend or prejudice the audience, and that it should not detain the attention too long from the chief part of the discourse. Dr. Johnson, whose Sermons † are entitled to frequent and serious perusal, is by no means happy in his introductions. In his beautiful sermon on Marriage, consisting of twenty-four pages, just one half is taken up in preliminary observations. He then divides his subject into two heads, and concludes the Sermon without any application or address to the audience. Both the intro-

* The reader will receive all necessary information concern the several parts of a discourse, by consulting Cicero de Oratore, Quintilian, Longinus, Blair's elaborate Lectures, Mr. Neale's Translation of the L'Abbe Mauri on Eloquence, and Dr. Gregory's Essay on the composition of a Sermon; he should, however, guard against entertaining Dr. Gregory's prejudices, respecting French writers. In the Doctor's Sermons he will often meet with original thoughts and beautiful language.

† They are entitled Sermons on different subjects, left for publication, by John Taylor, L.L.D. late Prebendary of Westminster, &c. in two volumes.

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duction and the conclusion, are strongly objectionable. And though the name of JOHNSON cannot be too highly revered, I do not propose his Sermons to a young Divine, as a pattern of the highest excellence: they may, notwithstanding, be recommended to incessant perusal, although they are the least finished of his compositions. They are written, according to his own account, and no man ever disputed the veracity of JOHNSON, each in a few hours; and it is probable, that, as they were composed for the service of other persons, they received from him no subsequent correction. We see, in every line, the hand of the moralist, and the philosopher; but the pen of the Divine, which, in Sermons, ought to be prominently conspicuous, we do not easily trace.

The French Catholic writers may be pronounced the best models for imitation, more especially in the exordium. Flechier, Bossuet, Massillon, are all deserving of peculiar regard and attention.

It may, however, sometimes, be expedient to adopt a different mode of introduction, from that now recommended. Unusual, or accidental circumstances may have occurred, which may not only warrant, but even demand, either an abrupt entrance on the subject, or, as it were, a personal apology, or affectionate conference with the congregation.*

* "The degree of knowledge, rank, and circumstances of life, the prevailing notions and customs of your congregations,

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An exordium of this kind bespeaks attention; and if the whole of the discourse be, as, in such cases, it invariably ought to be—and it is unpardonable if it is not—supported, so as to sustain that attention, the end of the Preacher is answered—his design is complete. Such an attempt, indeed, demands both judgment and talent; and their union is indispensably requisite to ensure success.

Rhetoricians seem not to be agreed whether a Sermon should pass without a formal notice, from the exordium to the argumentative part, or should be divided into heads. The one gives greater scope to oratory; the other affords more information and relief to the hearer. A subject sometimes naturally divides itself; but may often be usefully divided by the Preacher, into two or three heads. Should he, however, prefer the more oratorical method, he must employ all his diligence, and exercise all his judgment, first in the selection, and afterwards in the arrangement, of his arguments. "I might add," says Mr. Jerningham, "that the splitting the subject into "different members, and informing the audience "how each division is to be treated, is an injudici-"ous and defective method." This observation should, however, be received with a degree of limitation. The Preacher, whether he divides his

will afford you Employment to make your Sermons *local*, if I may so express it; calculated to promote the virtues, which they are chiefly called to exercise, and guard against the sins, of which they are chiefly in danger."—Abp. SECKER.

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Sermon or not, after his introduction, enters upon his subject. And in this part of the discourse, some improvement, it is generally thought, may be made. Open the Sermons of Dr. Clarke, of Bishop Coneybeare, of Dr. Horbury. You will see in each of them the powers of a great mind, employed on their subject. But the misfortune is, that they treat it as if their hearers were as well acquainted with it, had considered it as maturely, and had digested it as carefully, as themselves: they apply themselves solely to the understanding, and leave the heart entirely out of the question. It may, perhaps, be said, that Bishop Coneybeare, and Dr. Horbury wrote their Sermons for the purpose of preaching them before the University. But whatever be the auditory—whether an University, or one of the Inns of Court, which are considered the only LEARNED auditories—the Preacher should not forget that the greatest part of it will consist chiefly of young men, some not thoroughly, and others not at all, conversant with the subject on which he expatiates; and that, therefore, to those who most need instruction, not to add warning, expostulation, reproof, and exhortation, his discourse is productive of little good. Would not a Preacher, even to such an assembly, feel more satisfacion in the reflection, that he had "preached the Gospel, "the power of God unto salvation," than in the idle praises of a few who seek intellectual gratification*, rather than spiritual improvement? "Dis-

* The most useful Sermons, I have seen preached before an

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courses," says the excellent Secker, "containing "little that awakens drowsy attention, little that "inforces plainly and home what men must do to "be saved; leave them as unreformed as ever, "and only lull them into a fatal security." What was St. Paul's conduct before the Philosophers of Athens, when "certain men clave unto him, and "believed?" What, again, before Felix, when the power of his eloquence made the governor tremble? What before Agrippa, when he cried out —"almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian?" Let the reader look into Bishop Pearce's Sermons, preached for the edification of the Parish of St. Martin's; into Dr. Jortin's, addressed to the Inhabitants of Kensington; and let him say, whether he believes the several congregations would depart from Church, persuaded to be "altogether Christians?" No! such discourses seldom reach the heart, and are, therefore, as pulpit discourses, I had almost said useless. Let him read them in his own family, and he will there see how little calculated they generally are, to inspire men with a sense of the value of salvation: I would not be understood to insinuate that the Sermons of these learned Divines are without merit, and therefore, unworthy of perusal. The very contrary. They cannot be read, by the Clergy, too frequently. They are, indeed, written upon a wrong plan.

University, are those by the late Bishop Horne; some of the Discourses of Bishop Hurd, and those of Mr. Archdeacon Nares, before the Society of Lincoln's Inn, are both well adapted to that learned Auditory.

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Though they are not altogether unintelligible, yet, devoid of the graces and attractions, the address and persuasion, essential to popular discourses, they awaken little attention, and therefore, excite little interest. The Clergyman who preaches discourses of this description, may discover in almost every family in his parish, many mortifying instances of their inutility. Dry, uninteresting Sermons, proclaim loudly their own inefficacy. For Religion and Piety do not lie concealed, and continue inactive: they are not, it is true, so much prominent features, as powerful principles, influencing general decorum, and directing civil intercourse; they exert their vigor, indeed, in the regulation of families, in a devout observance of the ordinances of the gospel, and in a consequent suppression of the habits of vice. Does a Clergyman perceive this effect to be, in any tolerable degree, promoted by his preaching? It is his greatest encouragement; it is his refuge in affliction; his comfort under mortifying neglect; and his support under grievous disappointments. Do his congregations decline, and are his communions less frequently attended? He has sufficient evidence, that he is an useless* laborer in the Lord's Vineyard. Evidence of such a fact, so reproachful to himself, disgraceful to the Church, and injurious to Christianity,

* If you have preached a considerable time in a Place, and done little or no good; there must, in all probability, be some Fault, not only in your hearers, but in you or your sermons. *For the word of God*, when duly dispensed, is to this day, as it was originally, *powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword.*—Abp. SECKER.

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would, it might be supposed, induce him to examine, whether the discourses he delivers are calculated to awaken the sinner, and comfort the christian? And if his sermons are either moral essays or consist of abstract reasoning, he may easily account for his want of success as a Preacher, and for the decline of religion in his parish. When they, whose salvation is committed to his care, solicit bread, and he, in the phraseology of scripture, offers them only a stone, is it not to be expected, that many of them should, as the prophet strongly expresses it, "perish for lack of knowledge;" and that many should desert a Church, in which their Pastor administers disappointment for edification, and coldness for piety? How can it be supposed, that women, with the common education of a boarding-school, that shop-keepers, tradesmen, farmers, and servants, should give their attention to what they do not comprehend? The arguments the Preacher uses, are derived from much reading, and deep reflection; and the whole subject thereby becomes familiar to his mind. And can the generality of hearers, who have neither authors to consult, nor if they had, inclination to open them—who have never been taught to arrange their ideas—can they be supposed to give their attention to metaphysical abstraction? Let the Clergy, if they are so disposed, cultivate, with the utmost diligence, philosophical and metaphysical studies, but let them most cautiously abstain from introducing their language into the pulpit. When the attention of the congregation

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is once lost—when the sermon ceases to be interesting, because it is unintelligible—the Preacher preaches in vain; and what is a very melancholy consideration, they who assembled to hear him, instead of being "filled with good things," are, however "hungering and thirsting after righteous-"ness, sent empty away."

The necessity of delivering animated and empassioned, instead of argumentative and philosophical, discourses, is, I presume, obvious. But as it is evidently the intention of preaching—whether as some term it, to convince, or as others, to persuade—to make men, on the whole, better; let the Preacher try the effect of argument upon himself. I will suppose the subject of his discourse to be the * necessity of family worship, and that he urges the most solid arguments in support of it. I would enquire of him, whether, after hearing the discourse, he would, supposing him to have lived in the neglect of the precept, be so affected by it, as to be prevailed with to put the duty in practice? If he acknowledge that, though he might be convinced, yet he should not be induced to enter on the observance of it—such being the general effect of argument—how can he

* "We should confine our severity to our own practice. Only we must watch with moderate strictness over our Families also: not only keeping up the joint and separate Worship of God in them—which I hope no Clergyman omits—but forming them to every part of Piety and Virtue and Prudence.—Abp. Secker.

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imagine that the greater part of the hearers, after an imperfect attention—after not comprehending, it is probable, some of the arguments, should be prevailed with to establish in their families, a pious custom, which, unhappily, is, by the members of the Church of England, very generally neglected? It cannot be supposed. I infer, therefore, that a discourse, promising no higher effect, ought not, under any circumstances, to be addressed to a Christian assembly. Were the duty of family worship inculcated in a conventicle, the preacher, instead of having recourse to abstract reasoning, would conjure his auditors, as they valued the salvation of their souls, as they dreaded the reproaches of their children and families at the tribunal of God, to supplicate upon their knees, the blessing of the Almighty upon themselves, and upon their whole house. And the probability is, that the success would be much more abundant. A Clergyman can scarcely do a greater injury, either to religion or to the church, than by preaching a Sermon which fails to interest his congregation. The Sunday is passed by them without edification, which is the day set apart by its gracious Author, for the express purpose of establishing in his people, just principles, and of promoting a correspondent practice. But such a Preacher, from want of consideration, defeats that very design which he was ordained to effect. The consequence is, that men lose both their reverence for Religion, and their attachment to the Church. It is, therefore, greatly to be wished,

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that the Clergy would * examine their discourses, previous to the delivery of them, with an unprejudiced mind, and convince themselvss, whether they are really † calculated to dissuade men from walking in the way that leads to destruction. The improvement to be made in the Composition of Sermons, if my observation does not greatly deceive me, is, that they ought to resemble exhortations more than they generally do: the hearers should always be made to feel an interest in them, by the argumentative part being more popular, and by uniting a degree of warmth and earnestness, which, I know not why, are seldom attempted. Were our Sermons addressed to the heart, and the affections, instead of the understanding, the frequenters of the Church would, I am persuaded, consider it an happy deviation from the established practice. They would attend public worship with

* "We must consider all the while we compose, and reconsider as we preach, and afterwards—'Is this adapted sufficiently to the Capacities, the State of Mind, the Circumstances of 'the poor People who are to hear it: will this Part be clear, 'that home enough, a third well guarded against Mistakes: 'will they go back as much better disposed than they came, as 'it is in our Power to make them?" Perhaps one or more Ways of representing a necessary Doctrine or Duty have failed. We must think whether a more likely may not be found, or a less likely in Appearance prove more successful."—Abp. SECKER.

† "The monotonous, wearisome sound of a single bell might be almost as soon expected to excite moral impressions, as the general tenour of our public discourses, which are (with some exceptions, drowsily composed, and drowsily delivered. —JERNINGHAM."

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more readiness, and would give their Pastors more unequivocal proofs of its efficacy, both upon their minds and behaviour. Let the general characters of those who profess themselves members of the Church, be considered; and will the fondest attachment, and the blindest partiality, pronounce, that they are what the Gospel requires them to be—that their love abounds more and more, in all knowledge and in all goodness? It is a reproach cast upon the Establishment, that her adherents are as lukewarm in the profession of faith, as remiss in the practice of duty—that they are, from want of religious knowledge, unable to defend her doctrines, and from want of religious principle, negligent in the observance of her Ordinances. We allow the justice of the reproach, for we cannot deny it. And what is still more to be lamented, many seem to think they have Religion enough, provided they go, generally, to Church, and live as well as their neighbors, although they obviously are strangers to that vital, inward, piety, which is the distinguishing characteristic of the Gospel. The state of such men, which we cannot believe to be a state of salvation, may it not be attributed to the moral Essays, and argumentative Discourses to which the Clergy are, with such an unaccountable infatuation, attached? How greatly then, is it to be lamented, that all this deplorable * ignorance

* "Teach your People what is grievously wanted in the present Age, to value their Bibles more, and understand them better, and to read them both with Pleasure and Profit."—Abp. SECKER.

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and astonishing insensibility, cannot prevail with them to renounce the mode of writing and speaking, which has had so powerful a tendency to produce, what we cannot but esteem a disgrace to the Church, and which is, to its enemies, a cause of exultation! The improvement that every one acknowledges necessary to be made in the established Church, is evidently this—to impress its members more generally, with a sense of the importance of salvation—to persuade them that religion does not consist in mere profession, but in a renewal of the heart and mind, and that it is of them, that God hath spoken, saying—"I will "dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will "be their God, and they shall be my people." To produce this blessed effect, the natural effect of preaching,* animation must stand in the place of dulness, and zeal in that of indifference.

It is a lamentable consideration that moral, uninteresting discourses have been so long preached, that the apostolic declaration—that many men "will "not endure sound doctrine," is literally verified in our own Church. If a Clergyman "speak the "truth as it is in Jesus"—if he illustrate the genius, and enforce the precepts, of the gospel; they

*"I would have every Minister of the Gospel," says the amiable Fenelon, "address his audience with the zeal of a friend, with the generous energy of a father, and with the exuberant affection of a mother—*Soyez pieres, ce n'est pas assez soyez meres.*"—*JERNINGHAM.

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are scandalized. They discover their own ignorance, they vilify his labours, and confer the highest honor on the sectaries, by representing him as a fanatic, and an enthusiast. There is not, perhaps, one single Clergymen, who is distinguished by the excellence of his Sermons, and the impression of his elocution, whom ignorance has not industriously proclaimed, and suspicion cautiously received, as preaching the distorted doctrines, and pernicious errors of the conventicle.

I shall not be misunderstood, in deprecating cold, moral discourses, and recommending, in their stead, lively and animated exhortations, to encourage vague and empty declamation, such as we hear sometimes delivered by some Clergymen, whose sole object seems to be, to display their own superficial talents, and excite the unmeaning admiration of their auditors. I am solicitous to introduce a very different mode of preaching—to impress the preacher with the awful consideration—that he stands as the ambassador of God, between the living and the dead—that he is entrusted with the word of God, to awaken the obdurate, and alarm the impenitent, to encourage the desponding, and confirm the believing, Christian; and which seems to be unaccountably neglected by the Clergy, to console and bind up the broken-hearted—to comfort them that mourn, and to speak peace to the afflicted soul. "Eter-" nity? heaven! hell! death! these are scenes

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"which cast around an awful and universal interest."* If a sermon be declamatory, it may dazzle the imagination, and strike the ear, but will not interest the affections—if it be diffuse, it may bewilder the mind, but cannot improve it. Genuine eloquence, on the contrary, being addressed to the heart, leads it captive—the glory of God, the salvation of men, the welfare of society suggest the thought, and not infrequently, give it expression.

French Sermons, which, upon the whole, I consider more useful, than even the best of those in our own language, are liable to objections; and therefore should be read with care; the Catholic, which are more oratorical, abound with declamation, with point, and antithesis; the Protestant, which are more doctrinal, are verbose, and often, by consequence, tiresome in the perusal. There is, however, another objection, which applies more especially to the Catholic—their† system of theology

* "I beg, I may not be understood, that I am recommending to the Preacher to diffuse a gaudy colour over his composition."—JERNINGHAM.

† "The severe precepts, the austerity of doctrine, the unremitted rigour, that prevails in the moral discourses of the French Preachers, carry with them something of a repulsive nature. Those moralists survey the christian institution with a splenetic eye; a sombrous, monastic melancholy broods over their religious instructions: they dwell on the terrific part of the christian doctrine, deepening those clouds, which

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is gloomy, unsocial, and forbidding. Like our own Sectaries, they do not consider religion as interwoven with all the acts of life; their godliness consists in tautological prayers, and extatic raptures. But this is not the religion of the New Testament. Religion is to be the governing principle, to direct us in our several stations, as preparatory to a future, or eternal state of bliss or misery. When, therefore, the young Divine studies, or translates, or abridges French writers, he must not suffer himself to be so far transported with their beauties, as to forget their defects.—They may, by a due exercise of judgment, be admirably adapted to the English pulpit; and when they have the advantage of being well delivered, they will not merely ensure attention, but also affect the heart.

Another objection made to the Catholic sermons is, that they are all peroration; and that they contain very little reasoning. Allowing this objection in its full force, they will, being persuasive and highly oratorical, be listened to with more eagerness, and applied with more efficacy, both by a rustic and a polite auditory, notwithstanding this imputed defect,

appear to the affectionate believer, little more than relieving shades to attemper the blaze of mercy.—JERNINGHAM.

It may be further added, that the French Catholic Preachers are much too sparing of Scripture language, which, when judiciously introduced, is, in practical sermons, the highest ornament. See a preceding Note, page 264.

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than the most elegant moral essays. Such is the address of the Preacher, that the auditor feels, as if the Sermon was composed for his necessities, and on his account. The chief objection brought against the French Protestant Sermons is, as hath been already intimated, that they are immoderately lengthened, by a disgusting tautology. The Preachers inculcate their doctrines with great gravity, and often with much persuasion, but they are not so insinuating, as the Catholic writers. Both, however, may, in skilful hands, be made eminently conducive to the conviction of the understanding, as well as the persuasion of the affections.

A very general * prejudice, notwithstanding, prevails against them. But as far as I have had an opportunity of observing, that prejudice is, with very few exceptions, confined to those who preach argumentative discourses, and who are not usually considered the most useful Preachers. A young Clergyman, who was appointed to the care of a Church, which is attended by, what is commonly denominated, *a genteel congregation*, requested me to recommend to him some of the most energetic

* To all who suffer their understanding to be, on the subject of French Sermons, subservient to their prejudice, I would recommend a very judicious and instructive Pamphlet, published as an antitode to Dr. Gregory's sarcastic remarks, entitled, Brief Reflections on the Eloquence of the Pulpit, by the Rev. Dr. Gardiner. I have derived from the perusal of it, the highest satisfaction.

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English Sermons. I mentioned a * few distinguished writers, thinking, that each would supply him with some eloquent and useful discourses. He selected the most popular: his congregation increased; his hearers flattered him with their attention, and pronounced him a very excellent Preacher. His communicants likewise increased: but he had the mortification of observing, that the † *genteel people*, in their addresses to the Throne of Grace, continued to sit carelessly on their seats —that whilst he was reading the most affecting parts of the Liturgy, they appeared insensible to the value of the blessings he was supplicating, and to the horror of the curses from which he was praying they might be delivered. He perceived little change of conduct; little progress in piety: the Religion of his auditory consisted in mere formality. He lamented grievously his lot. But hoping that I might reconcile him to his situation, in which he would, I was persuaded, be singu-

* Bishops Horne, Shipley, Hurd, Dr. S. Johnson, Dr. J. Leland, in 3 vols; Dr. Ogden, Dr. S. Car, &c. &c.

† The custom of sitting during the time of prayers is, unfortunately, becoming very general throughout the Church of England, which is reducing the service to a mere matter of form. The highest classes of society, I mean families of distinction, usually behave with great reverence in the Church, and in that respect set a very laudable example; whereas many genteel people—those who imitate people of fashion in their follies—neglect to imitate them where imitation would be praise-worthy. The Bishop of London has lately addressed an admirable Letter to his Clergy on this subject.

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larly useful, I requested him to read the first volume of Massillon's Synodal discourses.—I knew his aversion to the French Preachers—but I hoped he would derive both consolation to his heart, and information to his mind. I had soon reason to congratulate myself. He eagerly perused the remaining volumes. His prejudice was so far overcome, that he expressed a wish to see some practical discourses. I sent him both Catholic and Protestant authors. He abridged and preached some sermons of both, greatly to his own satisfaction, and to the edification of his hearers. His congregation again increased; and instead of being mortified by addressing a *polite* auditory, he was comforted by seeing an assembly, consisting of many devout people. A spirit of devotion became more visible throughout the Church. The fame of his preaching attracted some of the Methodists and dissenters. He was not, however, induced by such testimonies of approbation, to become, what is termed, an Evangelical Preacher; I mean to say, his judgment and his conscience, forbade him to preach the doctrines of the Conventicle.

A learned friend of mine, lately deceased, was a great admirer of the argumentative writers.—Bishop Butler, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Jortin, Dr. Balguy, Mr. Stone, &c. &c. were among his favorite authors. Although he had composed many sermons, some of which he had occasionally delivered before the University, yet he sometimes adapted a Sermon from those writers, to his own

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congregation, to which he preached upwards of twenty years; but he ingenuously acknowledged, that he could not discover any improvement in morals, or attainment in religion. As he found his parishioners, they, with little variation, continued. He was, notwithstanding, a diligent pastor. But, unfortunately, he placed all excellence in what he termed good sense and sound reasoning; and such was, he said, the national character, that every Englishman preferred, *upon every occasion*, argument to eloquence. I mentioned to him some preachers, distinguished by their powerful address, and energetic elocution: he called them preachers of a day. I appealed to the effects produced by that mode of preaching: they would not, he thought, be lasting. A few years before his death, he was compelled to defend some property by an assize trial. Enquiring what counsel he had retained, he mentioned the leader of the circuit, of whom he had the highest opinion. The gentleman, I observed, to whom you have committed your cause, is confessedly, an eloquent pleader, who will address himself to the affections of the jury; whereas there is another professional gentleman, attending that circuit, who is distinguished by his good sense and sound reasoning, and being totally devoid of all rhetorical talents, he would address his arguments to their understanding. My friend instantly perceived my meaning, but begged that I would not, by any illustration or analogy, disturb his mind. The prejudices against eloquence in the

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pulpit, which he had imbibed in his youth, he possessed through the middle part of life, and cherished in his old age. He was a truly good man, an excellent scholar, and a sound Divine; but the highest esteem and warmest attachment could not pronounce him an useful preacher. By Ministers of such a description, however valuable their sense or enviable their learning, the flock will not be confined within the fold. Preachers, like my friend, will never accomplish the great end of preaching, which is, and it cannot be too often inculcated, to awaken the sinner, alarm the impenitent, and comfort the broken hearted. Does experience testify, that, in prophetic language, "men "take hold of the skirt of him," that is a *moral preacher or a deep reasoner*, "saying, we will go "with you, for we have heard that God is with you?" Do the amiable qualities, the incorruptible integrity, the vital piety of the congregation, to whom moral or argumentative Sermons are addressed, proclaim their efficacy, and justify their use? As reasonably almost might you expect branches without a stem, or a stem without a root; or to apply the elegant illustration of our Saviour to "gather grapes from a thorn, or "figs from a thistle."

Of style, it is foreign to my purpose to speak. If a Sermon is to be prepared for a country congregation, it cannot be too simple. "And one principal contrivance, says Archbishop Secker, "to gain the attention of the audience, is to make a Sermon

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extremely clear. Terms and phrases may be familiar to you, which are quite unintelligible to them; and I fear this happens much oftener than we suspect." Let your style have the amœnity of Addison, and the simplicity of Secker; combine ornament with ease, and piety with precision, still it will not be adapted to the pulpit, unless you can unite warmth, vehemence, and persuasion. In the Sermons and Lectures of the Bishop of London, we meet with many very striking instances of religious animation, and genuine eloquence. If a Sermon is intended for a popular auditory, and the Preacher strives—and every preacher ought to strive—to excel; the best models of style which can perhaps, be proposed, are the writings of Barrow, of Dr. Johnson, of Gibbon; the Bampton Lectures of Dr. White; and above all, the political works of Lord Bolingbroke. Yet in these writers, excellent as they are, there is one defect, against which the student cannot too carefully guard; and it is this—their sentences are often too long; and a Sermon consisting of long sentences, which can only be heard, is rendered, to a part of the hearers, almost unintelligible. Addison is generally praised as among the most elegant of the English authors: but his style, to use the expression of the incomparable Johnson, "sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation," to be adapted to the pulpit. * Unless it possessed

* What Dr. Johnson says of the style of Swift, is strictly applicable to all the writers of this class; among whom may, I fear,

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great advantages in the delivery, the congregation would scarce be kept awake. A sermon should be always animated; and it is only by reading the best authors, that a young composer can attain to excel-

be ranked the excellent Secker. "He pays no court to the passions: for purposes merely didactic, when something is to be told that was not known before, *this easy conveyance of meaning* is the best mode, but against that inattention, by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision; it instructs, but does not persuade."

The character of Tillotson's style is very justly delineated in Fitzosborne's Letters (XIV):

"Dr. Tillotson, who is frequently mentioned, as having carried this species of eloquence, viz. persuasion, to its highest perfection, seems to have had no notion of rhetorical numbers; and may I venture to add, that I think no man had ever less pretensions to genuine oratory, than this celebrated Preacher? One cannot but regret, that he who abounds with such noble and generous sentiments, should want the art of setting them off with all the advantage they deserve; that the sublime in morals should not be attended with a suitable elevation of language. The truth, however, is, his words are frequently ill-chosen, and almost always ill-placed; his periods are both tedious and unharmonious; as his metaphors are generally mean, and often ridiculous."

I have much wished that the valuable Sermons of Tillotson—and out of his vast collection, many such might be found—were reprinted, and the objections made by the author of the Letters removed: that part of his writings might then, with unqualified praise, be recommended as models to the young clergy; and also as a family book, containing sound doctrine and genuine morality, conveyed in a pious and insinuating manner.

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lence; by a careful perusal of the writers I have just mentioned, he will learn to be energetic without being declamatory, and vehement without being ostentatious. Whoever wishes to become an useful and accomplished Preacher, perspicuous but not inelegant, and persuasive but not enthusiastic, must give his days and nights to the acquisition of religious knowledge, and the cultivation of evangelic eloquence.

For the indispensable requisites of ornament, of figures, of the pathetic, and of the sublime, I refer the reader to Dr. Blair's admirable Lectures, which the oftener they are read, will excite greater emulation, and produce more visible improvement.

All rhetorical writers recommend in the peroration or conclusion of the Sermon, peculiar warmth and animation. And it is to be lamented, that both the old, and especially the modern, authors of Sermons, either contemptuously disregard, or intentionally overlook, what is equally indispensable to an eloquent, vehement exhortation, and to a plain practical Sermon. The conclusion, unquestionably, requires a more thorough knowledge of human nature, more address, greater power of language, than any other part of the composition; it is, therefore, proportionally difficult in the execution. The Preacher should, in the conclusion of his discourse, seize, warm, melt the heart; and should dispose the hearer by persuasion, or compel him by terror, to

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descend into it. He should make, as it were, a personal appeal to his auditory, and should, by the energy of his expression, and the vigor of his sentiment, attempt to infuse, as far as is possible, into every individual, a solicitude to know, and a resolution to fulfil the terms of salvation! Were this interest excited in the breasts of our congregation, we should not have such abundant cause, as we now have, to lament the little effect produced by preaching; we should not be mortified, by observing that our several flocks, either seem to have forgotten the discourse, the moment the Preacher has pronounced the blessing; or, which we cannot sufficiently deplore, to consider their duty as discharged by a mere attendance on public worship. I am not able, unfortunately, to refer the reader to one single author, who excels in the peroration of his Sermons. Dr. Blair, who has in his Lectures, strongly recommended this oratorical conclusion, has not once, in his celebrated discourses, attempted it. To my great disappointment and mortification, I have not met with an eloquent peroration in the compositions of some distinguished living* authors, where I naturally expected to find it. The prevailing methods alas! are, either coldly to recapitulate the argu-

* A volume of sermons, lately published by Dr. Gardiner, abounding with much clear reasoning, and fervid piety, and at the same time interspersed throughout with the most brilliant passages—had they possessed the requisite I am recommending—might have been considered as containing the happiest, and, indeed, the most complete, specimens of pulpit eloquence.

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ments, which, often by eluding the attention, exercise the patience of the auditory; or to draw inferences, which, having no tendency to rouse the affections, and enflame the mind, are reluctantly heard, and instantly forgotten. How much higher would be the effect, were the Preacher to awaken his auditory to a sense of their duty—to impress with all possible solemnity, the account they must give, to a righteous and just Being—and to conjure them with paternal affection, not to disappoint the expectations, and frustrate the designs of their Almighty Judge? To this part of the discourse more especially, let him direct all his judgment, and apply all his powers; let him consider his Sermon incomplete, and his duty imperfectly discharged, if he does not succeed, before the departure of the congregation, in persuading to good, or dissuading from evil. Let him consider himself in the situation of a father, who has been using the most powerful arguments to convince a beloved child—let him represent that child, as going from his presence, with a degree of conviction impressed upon his mind, but with his heart disposed to act in disobedience to it—would he not enforce these arguments, in the last words he had to utter, by the most importunate address, and the most affectionate exhortations? Would he not describe, in the most glowing colors, the ruin which awaited the child, and the misery which would, in consequence, overwhelm the parent? Or rather, let him consider himself as the Ambassador of Heaven, admitted to the honor of

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being commissioned by the Almighty to co-operate with him, in restoring his children, the works of his hand, and the objects of his love, to that favour which is better than the life itself. Let him place before his eyes, and engrave upon his heart, the interesting peculiarity of his situation, and the ineffable importance of his charge; the happiness accompanying a faithful execution, and the punishment awaiting the inexcusable neglect, of it; and to his effort to produce an eloquent exhortation, will then be super-added an ardent desire to promote the glory of God, and an inconceivable solicitude to become, through the Divine interposition, the blessed instrument of the salvation of men.

To give a Sermon merit, as a religious composition, and utility, as a popular exhortation, one thing more must be added, without which it will, generally, be incomplete; I mean a fervent and devout prayer. For is it not natural, after having faithfully shewn, and earnestly entreated, men, to walk in the way of salvation; after having convinced their understandings by argument, and persuaded their affections by exhortation, to implore him from whom cometh every good gift, that the word which has been spoken, in his name, and for his glory, should accomplish the end for which it was delivered? The most striking arguments in the discourse should form the subject of the prayer, which should be expressed in simple, yet animated language; the whole strain should be

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so pious and affecting, that the heart and soul, both of the Preacher and the congregation, should be raised, on the wings of devotion, above this sublunary scene, and transported to those celestial mansions, where the object of hope ceases, in actual possession, and where the discharge of duty is remunerated, with an exceeding reward!

The preceding Essay on the Art of Preaching, which although adapted to a foreign, rather than an English, pulpit, shews the necessity of oratory in a public speaker, be the congregation he addresses, learned or unlearned. And notwithstanding the just observation of Archbishop Secker, that "our nation is more disposed than most others, to approve a temperate manner of speaking;" yet it is, in some measure, from the want of a certain degree of oratory in the Clergy, that our Churches are so lamentably deserted.

It is generally supposed, that every writer adapts his composition to his mode of speaking. Thus, it is only necessary, it is said, to read a Sermon, in order to appreciate *the manner* of the Preacher. The observation, with very few exceptions, is, I believe, just; which is an additional argument, to prove the necessity of excellence in composition; for if the composition be indifferent, so, it may be inferred, will be the * elocution. A bad speaker

* "Previously studying and writing Sermons tends to fill them with digested and well adapted Matter, disposed in right order;

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may, if learned, be attended by sensible men; but those who have penetration to discover, and candor to approve, real excellence, when it has not the recommendation of exterior embellishment, seldom constitute a considerable part, even of a popular assembly. And they, surely, would prefer an eloquent, to an inanimate preacher. When such extreme solicitude is shewn by every description of men, to be present at the debates of the Great Assembly of the nation, is it to give their attention to the common, dull debaters? No! to the elegant harangues of the most accomplished of speakers, and to the indignant reply of his exasperated rival. When the same solicitude is expressed to hear a cause of importance tried in the Court of King's Bench, is it to be entertained by inferior pleaders? No! by Gibbs or Erskine, or Garrow or Park. Are the Theatres filled by the desire of hearing those who perform the lowest, or the highest characters? Are our Churches thronged, when the pulpit is occupied by an ordinary Preacher, or by an orator,

especially, if you will carefully revise them every Time you preach them; supply deficiencies, blot out repetitions, correct improprieties, guard against misapprehensions, enlighten what is obscure, familiarize what is too high, transpose what is wrongly placed, strengthen the weak parts, animate the languid ones. Your composition needs not be at all the stiffer, but may be the freer, for the pains thus employed upon it. You may frame it purposely to be spoken as if you were not reading it: and by looking it over a few times when you are about to use it, you may deliver it almost without being observed to read it." See note in P. 240.—Abp. Secker.

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who addresses his congregation, as personally interested in the efficacy of what he is delivering? And is it not surprising, that seeing, as we have, our Churches more and more deserted, during the last thirty years, no attempt, no efficacious attempt, at least, has been made by the Universities, the places of resort for young men, preparatory to the office of the Sacred Ministry, to teach them to speak with gracefulness, in order that they might preach with power? Unless a different mode both of writing and speaking be introduced into the Church—should the same proportion of its members desert it during the next thirty years, as have in the preceding period—the enemy may adopt the language of the prophet, and exclaim in degrading contempt, and bitter derision—"the punishment of thy *negligence* is accomplished, O daughter of Zion." Rather may the excellence of her Ministry be so eminently conspicuous, that the established church may emphatically be called, "the way of holiness! May no lion be there, nor any ravenous beast go up thereon! But may the redeemed walk there, and may the ransomed of the Lord return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads! May all her members obtain spiritual joy and gladness, and schism and disaffection flee away!"

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A PRAYER.

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A

PRAYER.

GOD, and Father of Mercy, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our infirmities, I prostrate myself at thy Throne, beseeching thee to hear my prayer, and to receive the petitions which I now offer unto Thee. I present myself, in humble adoration before thee, ardently desirous of knowing thy will, and earnestly supplicating the assistance of thy powerful grace, that I may be enabled to fulfil it. To this end, correct and subdue in me all inordinate desires and unholy attachments: impress thy law on my soul, that it may both establish my principles, and influence my behaviour; that both the thoughts of my heart, and the tenor of my life, may be such as "become a Minister of the Gospel of Christ." Let no avocations withdraw me from entering daily into myself, that I may become more and more acquainted with my own heart; that its approbation may be my greatest comfort, and its reproaches my greatest dread.

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Engrave upon my mind the character which thou expectest me to sustain in society; the good which my example will produce, if it be irreproachable and amiable; the evil, if worthless or suspected. Guard me, therefore, against levity of behaviour; against sudden passion and violent transports; against bewitching pleasures, contemptible meanness, detestable avarice, and unlawful gain. Let no deviation from piety be encouraged by my demeanor; but may my private life most efficaciously enforce my public preaching. May no soul sanction its indiscretions, or extenuate its vices, by pleading the licence of my unworthiness.

As a Minister of thy holy word, grant me an uniform and regular diligence, which may neither be overcome by indolence, nor enfeebled by relaxations. Let no indulgence in amusements, however innocent, nor attachment to studies, however enticing, seduce me from an invariable application to the several duties of my calling; but may every pursuit, which is not an immediate part of it, be regulated by prudence, and restrained by severity, lest my mind should be alienated from the discharge of ecclesiastical functions, and diverted from the attainment of evangelical holiness; lest I should forget that I am, in thy holy Church, "a guide to the blind, and a light to them that are in darkness; and lest, after having preached it to others;" and warned them against the habits of temptation, and the allurements of sin, I should myself be treacherously overcome

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by the one, and everlastingly ruined by the other. Grant me to be a watchful shepherd, preserving, by prudent advice and salutary counsels, the flock within the fold, which I have undertaken to instruct in faith, and deliver from danger.

Impress me with such a sense of the station which I am appointed to fill, that I may devote all the powers of my mind, and all the faculties of my soul, to a faithful discharge of it: let me never forget, that, whether it is obscure or exalted, I am equally an ambassador of the King of Kings, and a servant of the Lord of Lords. Thus honored, thus distinguished, may no temptations of interest, nor allurements of pleasure, damp the vigorous exertion and unwearied diligence, inherent in the commission of thy Ministers, to bring the souls of whom thou hast appointed me the spiritual overseer, to "a knowledge of the truth;" to an acquaintance with their moral condition; to a firm trust in thy goodness and an uniform obedience to thy will. May every discourse which I deliver, be calculated, by thy divine blessing, to awaken the thoughtless, and alarm the impenitent, or to establish the righteous in the ways of godliness, and comfort those that mourn. When I "preach thy laws, and take thy covenant in my mouth," let me not be satisfied with the persuasion, that the discourse which ought to excite, in every one who hears it, an ardent desire of salvation, is ingenious in its composition, solid in its arguments, or elegant in its style; rather, O God, may it pe-

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netrate the hearts, and supply the wants of those "very many in the open valley, who are very dry;" and may thy spirit, in the delivery of it, "say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord, behold I will cause breath to enter into you; and may they stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army: put thy spirit into them, and they shall live;" awaken them, and all men, from the deadly torpor of insensibility; animate them with a lively sense, and a deep conviction, of their deplorable condition; and, if it seem good unto thee, leave them no rest in their souls, until they see the danger, and anticipate the punishment, of their horrible ingratitude and daring rebellion. "Open "their eyes that they sleep not in death. Pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication." May the temples, in which we assemble to worship thee, exhibit congregations of men, not collected by the power of habit, but actuated with reverence and godly fear: and that they may not presume to present themselves before Thee with unseemly levity, and with unprepared minds; "approaching thee with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from thee." Do thou inscribe on their souls this awful sentiment—"where-"with shall I come before the Lord, and bow "myself before the high God!" May the parents, by the influence of example, infuse into their offspring a priniple of devotion; may "*they* "infuse the same into *their* children, and "*their* children into *another* generation." When we "thus call upon thy name, we know that

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Thou wilt hear us; thou wilt graciously say, it is my people; and we, in humble thankfulness, shall say, the Lord is our God." Let thine heritage, the Church, which thou hast purchased with thy Blood, be no longer defiled by the lamentable ignorance and abominable stupidity, which contemptuously refuse to hear the calls of Truth, and impiously set at nought the exhortations of Piety.

But whatever shall be the effect of the Holy Word in my mouth; whether I am encouraged to meditation, study, and labour, by the increase of morals, and the prevalence of Religion; or humbled and depressed by ignorance of the Laws, and contempt of thy Word, let me not be discontented and impatient, but wait thy good time, when it shall please thee to give the increase. May judgment direct, and zeal stimulate me to try every method, and adopt every expedient, to convert sinners unto thee. And oh! if it be thy blessed will, let me not labour in vain. May the hearts of all those over whom thon hast appointed me to watch, be induced to "receive the word with meek-"ness," to apply it with fidelify, and to "bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit." May the quiet of families, the obedience of servants, the kindness of masters, the duty of children, and the affection of parents, all result from the preaching of thy Holy Word. May the study of the Sacred Oracles employ their leisure, and edify their minds; and may it be thy good pleasure, to "make a covenant of peace with them, to set thy Sanctuary in the midst of

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them, that they may be thy people, and thou be their God, in truth and in righteousness." Produce, I humbly implore thee, this conversion unto thee, this change of will and renewal of heart, that as often as thou shalt call those entrusted to me, to give an account of their conduct, I may have the consolation of believing that they have "died in thy faith and fear; that their peace was made with thee; and that their names were written in the Book of Life!"

When I pray that all the flock may be thine, humbly and earnestly do I beseech thee, that the Shepherd may not be abandoned of thee. Let not my unworthiness to minister at the altar, be the cause of my reprobation: but when Thou shalt summon me to give an account of my stewardship—of my behaviour as a Man, of my piety as a Christian, and of my fidelity as a Minister—grant that my soul may be supported by faith, and enlivened with hope; that the retrospect of a life passed in "keeping thy commandments," in preaching thy word, and promoting thy Glory, may smooth the face of death, and bereave the grave of all its terrors.

And whilst I implore thy blessing on my labors, and on the people committed to my charge, beseeching thee, that our lives may be holy, in order that our deaths may be happy, I pour out my soul in supplications, that thy gospel may dispense its benign influence through every land: may it be faith-

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fully preached, and conscientiously practised; and may it be productive, in the hands of all thy Ministers, of the everlasting salvation of those to whom it is announced. May the peace which it proclaims, be universally established, and nation go to war with nation no more: may the several families of the earth be actuated by religious principles; and may concord and unanimity, brotherly love and Christian charity, be the distinguishing characteristics of all those—to whatever sect they belong, and to whatever party they are attached—"who name the name of Christ."

Above all, I humbly entreat thee, that thy Providence may, in an especial manner, be extended over this thy Church, "which thy own right hand hath planted;" do thou be pleased to dwell in the midst of it, that it may be called, "the dwelling of the truth, and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the holy mountain: may the inhabitants of every city and of every place, go one to another, saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts in his holy Temple;" may it no longer be said of any of its members, that "they trust not in the Lord, and that they draw not near to their God;" but do thou, in mercy "make of them a name and a praise among all people of the earth." May the Gospel be preached in it, in all its purity, and may the lives of its Ministers be its brightest ornaments; "may the law of truth be in their mouth, and let not iniquity be found in their lips; may they walk before thee in

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peace and equity, and turn many away from their iniquity:" may its worship be duly frequented, and its Sacraments, in particular the commemoration of our Redemption, in the Holy Communion, be religiously observed: may that Blessed Ordinance be no longer "a stone of stumbling" to the ignorant "and a rock of offence" to the weak; but may the "old men, and all the inhabitants of the land, receive it to their comfort," and may it no longer be "the reproach of their children, that they go away from the Heavenly Feast, and do not keep it;" may schism be extirpated from "the habitation of thy House;" and may attachment to it, proceeding from a conviction of its purity and truth, be individually established; may the voice of joy and salvation be heard in every dwelling; and may the several families of which this thy Church is composed, erect an alter unto thee, and may they daily offer upon it "an oblation of great gladness; saying, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen!"

THE END.

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